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New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Mladineo (Croatia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 10

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict

Letter from Botswana transmitting the report on the progress made towards the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (A/61/589)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.27)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Festus G. Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana.

Mr. Festus G. Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mogae: In view of the wording of this agenda item, let me begin by stating that diamonds are a valuable resource. Clean diamonds have made and continue to make an enormous contribution to economic development and bring happiness to many people, especially during this time of the festive season.

Diamonds are one of Africa's major natural resources. About 65 per cent of the world's diamonds, worth about $8 billion per annum, are sourced from Africa. In southern Africa, more than 28,000 people are employed by the diamond industry. At the global level, about 10 million people are either directly or indirectly supported by the diamond industry.

Botswana owes its advances in development to the exploitation of minerals, especially diamonds, which account for about 33 per cent of gross domestic product, about 75 per cent of export earnings, and about 50 per cent of Government revenues. All mineral rights are vested in the State. Revenues earned through taxes, royalties and dividends from Government shareholding in the company that mines the diamonds accrue to the national coffers. Those are revenues that we have used to develop schools, health facilities and physical infrastructure.

It is against that background that Botswana, alongside the international community, is fully committed to working in partnership and cooperation with States members of the Kimberley Process to maintain and enhance the credibility of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and the legitimate diamond trade.

I am pleased to present to the General Assembly the annual report of the Kimberley Process. The Kimberley Process held its annual plenary in

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06-63974 (E)

Gabarone, Botswana, from 6 to 9 November 2006. The report gives an overview of the activities of the Kimberley Process during 2006, the challenges that the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme faces, and strategies agreed by the Gabarone plenary to address those challenges.

The Kimberley Process is a unique tripartite arrangement between Governments, non-governmental organizations and the diamond industry, whose main objective is to exclude conflict diamonds from the legitimate trade in rough stones.

Since its inception, the Kimberley Process has enabled closer interaction between participants, observers, applicants and various organizations, providing a valuable platform to consolidate the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, as well as to explore ways and means of curbing the flow of illicit diamonds. In that way, the Kimberley Process has been instrumental in contributing to the prevention of conflict and the maintenance of peace and security.

The Kimberley Process remains open on a global, non-discriminatory basis to all countries and regional economic integration organizations willing and able to fulfil its requirements. In that regard, countries continue to apply to and join the Kimberley Process. During the current year, New Zealand and Bangladesh joined the Scheme, bringing the total number of participants to 47, representing 71 countries. That is so because the 25 European Union member States are represented by the European Commission as a single participant. With its current membership, the Kimberley Process now covers the vast majority of all States involved in trade in rough diamonds. A number of countries, such as Cape Verde, the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Kazakhstan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Liberia, Mali, Mexico, Swaziland, Tunisia and Turkey have expressed interest in joining. It is the desire of the Kimberley Process to see the widest possible participation. To that end, it continues to engage and encourage countries to do so.

The peer review mechanism, the quarterly statistical submissions and annual reporting by participants are major tools for monitoring the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme by participants. As of the end of November 2006, 34 participants had received review visits. That compares with 19 for the same period last year. In all, a total of 43 of the 47 participants have received or invited review visits, thus ensuring the largest number of participants it has monitored under the peer review mechanism. Review visits are now increasingly seen not only as part of a long-term sustained process of implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, but also as tools for technical assistance, thus serving the dual purpose of monitoring and support. Plans are under way to begin a second round of review visits to build on the lessons learned and successes of the first round of visits and thus to further strengthen the monitoring process.

Statistics that the Kimberley Process collects and analyses form an integral part of monitoring to ensure that conflict diamonds do not enter the legitimate trade in rough diamonds. Participants are required to submit statistics on a quarterly basis, and I am particularly pleased to report that all participants submitted statistics for 2005. That is an important improvement over 2004.

The annual analysis exercise enables specific concerns for individual participants to be brought out. Analyses of the 2005 statistics identified data discrepancies as the most common problem. The bulk of data discrepancies was, however, resolved through bilateral reconciliations by participants. In order to improve statistical reporting and to advance transparency, the Gabarone plenary agreed that, in future, summary data on trade and production by value and volume, as well as counts of certificates issued under the Certification Scheme, should be released.

During 2006, our major preoccupation has been the review of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme itself. When the Certification Scheme was established in 2003, it was agreed that it would be subjected to periodic reviews to allow participants to conduct a detailed analysis of all its elements. The review was to include, among other things, consideration of the continuing need for the Certification Scheme, taking into account the perceptions of the participants and of the continued threat posed by conflict diamonds at the time of the review. It was further agreed that the first review would be conducted within three years of its implementation. As the Certification Scheme was implemented in July 2003, the review had to be undertaken and concluded in time for presentation to the Gabarone plenary. Indeed, preparations for the review started at the Gatineau, Canada, plenary, where an ad hoc working group chaired by Canada was

established. The mechanics of the review were agreed during the Moscow plenary.

The review was completed and presented to the Gabarone plenary for consideration and adoption. In broad terms, the review focused on the following three main areas: first, the impact of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme on the international trade in rough diamonds and the extent to which the Scheme has been effective in preventing the flow of conflict diamonds into the legitimate trade in rough diamonds; secondly, the technical provisions of the Scheme and whether they are functioning as well as planned or require improvement; and thirdly, the operations of the Scheme, their effectiveness and efficiency.

The findings of the review are that all available data suggest that the majority of the international trade in rough diamonds is now carried out within the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. Since the implementation of the Certification Scheme in 2003, it has contributed to substantial increases in the volume and value of rough diamonds exported through official channels in countries previously affected by conflict diamonds. The technical provisions of the Certification Scheme were found to be working well overall. They were being enforced through a number of seizures of irregular shipments and prosecutions for infringement of the Certification Scheme regulations by various participants.

However, as can be expected with an international system of such complexity, technical problems continue to be encountered. The Kimberley Process continues to address those emerging challenges. During the review, suggestions were made regarding possible solutions for dealing with technical problems. Many of those suggestions were captured in the report and presented in the form of recommendations.

Effective implementation of internal controls is one of the issues that were identified in the review as an important challenge. A number of recommendations were put forward to address it. Given that internal controls form the very foundation of the Certification Scheme, recommendations in this area require immediate implementation, as internal controls and their effectiveness remain the major priority of the Process.

On the operations of the system, the findings of the review are that the collection and analysis of statistics, as well as the peer review monitoring systems, are not only working well but remain essential tools. Evidently, given the achievements of the Certification Scheme to date, there can be no doubt that it must be continued and improved, as appropriate. Participants, observers and other stakeholders made many suggestions in the areas of statistical requirements and the peer review monitoring system. The majority of those suggestions have been captured in the recommendations.

The report of the review contained more than 40 recommendations. The Gaborone Plenary endorsed them following full and constructive deliberations. In terms of the rules of procedure of the Kimberley Process, the report will be translated into all the working languages of the Kimberley Process, which are English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian — unfortunately, no African language. That is similar to the United Nations talking about Africa, with no African language.

There is overwhelming evidence that the introduction of the Certification Scheme has had a positive impact on reducing the trade in conflict diamonds. However, the mining of diamonds in northern Côte d'Ivoire, which is under rebel control, presents a very difficult and challenging situation. The Kimberley Process is seriously disturbed by the leakage of Ivorian diamonds into the legitimate trade in rough diamonds. The problem of diamonds from Côte d'Ivoire is not new, but it is one that continues to plague the Kimberley Process. Its solution will require the collective resolve of the international community.

Côte d'Ivoire prohibited the export of diamonds from its territory as far back as 2002. That prohibition is still in force. Consequently, since the beginning of the implementation of the Certification Scheme, exports of diamonds from Côte d'Ivoire have been banned by the authorities in that country. The introduction of rough diamonds into the legitimate diamond trade not only threatens the integrity and credibility of the Kimberley Process but also represents an area of grave concern to the international community.

In addition to the nine-point resolution that the Kimberley Process adopted at the Moscow Plenary to stop Ivorian diamonds from entering the legitimate trade in rough diamonds, the Security Council imposed sanctions on exports of Ivorian diamonds in December

2005. That decision effectively prohibited all States — whether Kimberley Process participants or not — from dealing in Ivorian diamonds.

In implementing the nine-point resolution, the Kimberley Process conducted a survey of participants in 2006 to find out if any diamonds suspected of originating from Côte d'Ivoire had entered the territory of any of the participants. To date, only one participant has reported confiscation of a shipment of rough diamonds suspected of being of Côte d'Ivoire origin.

The situation concerning Côte d'Ivoire's diamonds was discussed at length during the Gaborone Plenary, and a number of measures were agreed to help contain the leakage of Ivorian diamonds into the legitimate trade. Those measures will remain a priority of the Kimberley Process until the problem is resolved. Of course, other efforts aimed at resolving the Côte d'Ivoire conflict must be intensified, especially as diamonds are not the cause of the conflict.

I wish to commend the Government of Liberia for its strong determination to meet the requirements of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. We welcome the readiness of the Government of Liberia constructively to engage the Kimberley Process on the relevant issues and its preparedness to cooperate in the search for solutions.

At the invitation of the Liberia Minister of Lands, Mines and Energy, a Kimberley Process mission was sent to Liberia in May 2006. That expert mission was undertaken against the backdrop of an earlier visit, in February 2005. The 2006 mission was mandated to, among other things, assess the measures taken by the Liberian Government to establishment a transparent, effective and verifiable system to implement the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, with particular focus on the establishment of a system of internal controls.

The expert mission reported that, in spite of the post-conflict difficulties that Liberia faces, the country has made considerable progress in implementing the recommendations of the February 2005 mission. It found that the biggest challenge facing the country was the establishment of internal controls. On that front, Liberia is receiving technical assistance from the United Nations Mission in Liberia; the United States Government, which, through the Futures Group, has a consultant working with the Liberian Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy; the United Nations Development Programme; and private-sector organizations such as De Beers and the Dubai Diamond Exchange.

I am therefore pleased to state that Liberia has made a great deal of progress in implementing the recommendations of the May 2006 mission. I am sure that I speak for everyone when I say that we will continue to encourage others to support Liberia in its endeavours to prepare itself to meet the requirements of and join the Certification Scheme once sanctions are lifted, which I hope will happen soon.

The Kimberley Process has, through its peer review mechanism, recognized that some participants may require technical assistance to improve or enhance their capacity fully to implement the Certification Scheme. In its role as informal coordinator for technical assistance, the United States has identified several major assistance programmes, which are now being implemented. In addition, the United States has had a long-standing assistance programme in Sierra Leone. The United Nations Development Programme is also helping to foster cooperation among the diamond-producing countries of the Mano River Union and sponsored a conference in June 2006 to promote regional harmonization of policies. The World Diamond Council has also provided technical assistance and training to many participants over the years.

Let me conclude by taking this opportunity to express our deep gratitude for the assistance and cooperation of the United Nations, which has been, and continues to be, extended to us to the Kimberley Process and in particular to Botswana as its Chair. Without the support and cooperation of the United Nations, the Kimberley Process would not have been able to visit northern Côte d'Ivoire to assess at first hand diamond mining activity in that part of the country, and to understand the challenges that the situation presents to us all. I am sure that the Kimberley Process will continue to rely on this support in its endeavour to eliminate conflicts diamonds. I reiterate the fact that the Kimberley Process is committed to working tirelessly to make the diamond industry one of which the international community can be truly proud and, above all, an industry that continues to make a positive difference in the lives of many people around the world.

I wish to end by congratulating the European Community on its imminent assumption of the Chair of the Kimberley Process in January 2007. I welcome the leadership of the European Community, which represents 25 members of the European Union. The European Community can count on the strong and assured support of India as Vice-Chair and, indeed, that of Botswana as immediate former Chair. The combined leadership of the European Community and India should enable us to effectively address the challenges that the Kimberley Process has identified.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Botswana for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Festus G. Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. McNee (Canada): It is my honour to address the General Assembly today on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Let me to begin by congratulating His Excellency the President of Botswana on his very cogent statement today and congratulate Botswana on a successful term as Chair of the Kimberley Process in 2006. His report and the draft resolution that we are adopting today are testament to the strong leadership provided by Botswana in the face of serious and challenging issues that have confronted the Kimberley Process over the past year.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the European Community as the incoming Kimberley Process Chair for 2007, as well as India as the Vice-Chair. We look forward to working with your delegations as we continue to advance the implementation and the strengthening of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand remain fully supportive of the Kimberley Process, which advances human security and the prevention of conflict by preventing conflict diamonds from penetrating the legitimate diamond market. Recognizing these objectives, New Zealand recently joined Canada and Australia as participant members of the Kimberley Process.

The Certification Scheme is working, and has already had a major impact on the global diamond trade, thanks in large measure to the comprehensive scope of the scheme. The Certification Scheme not only deprives criminals and non-State armed groups from easy access to capital, but has also improved the revenue-generating capacity of Governments formerly affected by conflict diamonds, such as Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The impact of this shift in resource flows on the international community's conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts has been significant.

We are pleased to note the constructive spirit in which Kimberley Process Governments, industry and civil society partners continue to effectively implement and enforce key Kimberley commitments. Canada, Australia and New Zealand are particularly pleased by the mobilization of the Kimberley Process community in response to allegations by the United Nations Group of Experts regarding Côte d'Ivoire that Ivorian conflict diamonds have been passing through third countries, including Kimberley Process members.

To address the situation of one Kimberly Process member country, a Special Envoy of the Chair of the Process visited senior officials in Ghana between 30 October and 1 November, and, at the November plenary, the Kimberley Process subsequently endorsed an action plan intended to remedy the weaknesses identified in Ghana's system of internal controls.

We note with satisfaction that numerous offers of technical assistance for the implementation of these measures have been made by Kimberley Process participants and observers, and we are pleased by the proactive role the Kimberley Process has played in addressing this situation. The Kimberley Process will continue to work with Ghana towards prompt implementation of this action plan.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand are also pleased that the Kimberley Process has adopted the report of the third year review, which provides an overview of the progress made by the Kimberley Process since its implementation in 2003 and outlines a blueprint for the ongoing improvement of the Process, articulating a number of concrete measures that may be taken to this effect. We encourage all Member States and relevant United Nations institutions and bodies to cooperate with the Kimberley Process in the implementation of these measures.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand welcome the elevation of the group on alluvial production — formerly a sub-group under the aegis of the working

group on monitoring — to the status of a full working group. As a sub-group, this group has already proved its usefulness, and we are confident that Angola, as the 2007 Chair of the group, will provide the leadership required to ensure that the group continues to enhance the Kimberly Process' ability to respond to the challenges facing artisanal-alluvial producers.

(*spoke in French*)

The Kimberley Process is making a major contribution in breaking the link between natural resources and armed conflict, and stands as a living testament to what can be achieved through the honest partnership of Governments, the United Nations, the private sector and civil society. It is — and will remain — an essential tool for our ongoing efforts to prevent conflict, and we look forward to strengthening and deepening its implementation and enforcement in the months ahead.

Mr. Mbuende (Namibia): It gives me pleasure to participate in the debate on agenda item 10 on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflicts, in general, and on the Chair's report on breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to the prevention and settlement of conflicts, in particular.

Namibia supports the draft resolution on the item, which we have co-sponsored for two reasons primarily. First, it is an expression of our commitment to international peace and security and particularly to conflict prevention and resolution. Secondly, it is an expression of Namibia's commitment to protect the integrity of our diamond industry.

We are conscious of the relationship between conflicts and natural resources. Natural resources such as diamonds, oil, timber, gold, copper, water and land have had the potential to generate conflict. Some conflicts have been engendered by a struggle over the control of natural resources. In such cases, the conflict was an expression of competition over the control and utilization of resources. The party that had control over the resources used the revenues derived therefrom to finance its war efforts. There are also other instances where resources are not necessarily the cause of conflict but in which the parties to the conflict use revenues from natural resources to sustain it. Diamonds have been used in that regard, hence the expression "blood diamonds".

Namibia has committed itself to protecting the integrity of its diamond industry by ensuring that its diamonds are not contaminated by blood diamonds. We also want to ensure that our industry does not whitewash blood diamonds. We cannot allow one of our most important industries to undermine our commitment to international peace and security. It is not only our standing and credibility that is at stake but also the very existence of the industry. The diamond industry is too important for the development of our country, and its integrity and long-term sustainability must be ensured. Transparency in the marketing of our diamonds is of utmost importance in that regard. It was against that background that Namibia joined the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

It is our considered opinion that the Kimberley Process guarantees transparency in the marketing of our diamonds. It also provides a unique opportunity for cooperation among diamond-producing countries. The Kimberly Process may, in fact, be regarded as a moral marketing cartel of the diamond-producing countries. We are very pleased to note that this cartel has been growing and that most of the rough diamonds traded internationally today are of conflict-free origin.

It is important to note that there have been positive developments in a number of diamond-producing countries that were at war, such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Those countries are engaged in peacebuilding processes and have either taken measures to ensure, or are in the process of ensuring, that diamonds are used for the promotion of development rather than for fuelling conflicts. That does not mean that those countries are fully compliant with the Kimberley Process; what is important is to acknowledge that an environment that can lead to full compliance has been created.

Allow me to pay special tribute to the sister Republic of Botswana that has led the Kimberley Process in 2006 and during whose tenure a number of positive developments took place. Namibia would also like to congratulate the European Community and India, which are to assume the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship, respectively, of the Kimberley Process for 2007. Namibia would like to assure them of its full cooperation in ensuring that their mandates are crowned with success.

Ms. Barrett (United States of America): The United States is pleased to sponsor draft resolution A/61/L.27, on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict. We have made great strides in controlling the flow of conflict diamonds since the late 1990s witnessed brutal atrocities in Africa. Governments have joined forces with the diamond industry and civil society to control and monitor international trade in rough diamonds through the Kimberley Process. We join those in the international community who commend the Kimberley Process for dramatically reducing the flow of conflict diamonds and thus contributing to regional security, peace and stability.

Through the multilateral efforts of the Kimberley Process, we have made remarkable progress in a relatively short period of time to control conflict diamonds. Under the bold leadership this year of the Botswana Government, Kimberley Process participants took further steps to increase controls on the international diamond trade including calls for increased Government oversight of the industry.

Kimberley Process participants have been generous with technical assistance to help diamond-producing countries implement controls, but we encourage other donors to step forward to help diamond producers build capacity to monitor the diamond trade from mine to export. The cooperation of the diamond industry and its commitment to a zero-tolerance policy towards conflict diamonds has been essential to Kimberley Process efforts. The Kimberley Process has been made stronger by the efforts of civil society to identify emerging problems and promote constructive solutions.

The Kimberley Process should not rest on its laurels. Much has been accomplished, but the trade in conflict diamonds remains a threat to some of the most fragile States around the globe. The Kimberley Process will need to remain vigilant and respond quickly when evidence emerges that diamonds may be financing conflict or threatening regional stability. We appreciate the European Community's willingness to take over the role of chair of the Kimberley Process in 2007, and look forward to a year of continued close cooperation in the efforts to control conflict diamonds.

Mr. Chulkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First, allow me, on behalf of the Russian Federation, to congratulate our colleagues from Botswana for their successful performance of their function, this year, as Chair of the Kimberley Process, in particular, the effective work on the preparation and agreement on the draft resolution for this session of the General Assembly, entitled, "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts" (A/61/L.27).

In our view the Kimberley Process has, to date, made substantial progress towards achieving its main goals and has significantly strengthened its authority. It is essential to further increase the efforts of the international community, including through strengthening the potential of the United Nations and the decisions taken to resolve the issue of monitoring the mining and trade of conflict diamonds, taking into account the continuing armed conflicts in several African countries.

It is clear that the growth in the effectiveness of the Kimberley Process depend directly on ensuring the universality of its membership and harmonization of the actions of all of its working groups. Those were the main issues focused on by Russia during its chairmanship of 2005. Botswana — whose chairmanship we greatly appreciate — did the same this year.

In this context, I would like to note that, given the importance of the diamond business and its specific nature, it is important to expand the number of participants, as well as observers, of the Kimberley Process by including the organizations that form the infrastructure of the world market, namely banks and insurance and diamond-shipping companies.

The draft resolution that we are about to adopt today reflects the substantial progress and activity achieved under the aegis of the Kimberley Process during 2006. However, we are convinced that much still remains to be done to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the mandate of this process. In future, we will need to strengthen one of its main bases, which is the use of the international Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, which is designed to ensure real monitoring and control of the international movement of diamonds, guaranteeing feedback between exporters and importers.

For its part, the Russian Federation, including State entities, the diamond industry and civil society, is ready to continue to make every possible effort within

the United Nations, the Kimberley Process and other international organizations and forums, and also on a bilateral basis, in order to prevent the use of diamonds to fuel international conflicts. We call on other United Nations members to do this as well, particularly those who have still not joined the Kimberley Process.

In conclusion, I would like to wish the European Community as Chair and India as Vice-Chair of the Kimberley Process next year every success in their important posts and ensure them that the Russian Federation will continue to participate most actively and cooperate actively in the Kimberley Process.

Mr. Barnes (Liberia): The Liberian delegation cherishes the opportunity to participate in the current General Assembly consideration of agenda item 10, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict".

Since its establishment, the United Nations has so far succeeded in averting the recurrence of a third global war. However, it is noteworthy that we have not been successful in eliminating inter-State and civil conflicts or removed their causes.

In this context, Liberia, as a country that is emerging from a devastating civil conflict, knows only too well the role a precious commodity such as diamonds can play in prolonging conflicts and its destabilizing consequences, as witnessed in the Mano River subregion. Through it all, Liberians have learned the hard way, thus enabling us to finally renounce war and embrace peace with a commitment to build a democratic society in which the interests of all are served and basic rights are protected. To this end, I wish to echo the gratitude of the Government and people of Liberia to Member States, specialized agencies and the United Nations system, particularly the African Union (AU) and the United States of America and the European Union, for their continued overwhelming support during and after our civil conflict.

In just three years, the recognition of the Kimberley Process by the United Nations Security Council and this great body as an effective mechanism for eliminating conflict diamonds from the legal trade of rough diamonds has paid considerable dividends in the resolution of conflicts around the globe. I, therefore, heartily congratulate Botswana for the very professional and effective manner in which the affairs of the Kimberley Process have been conducted, and for the comprehensive report contained in document A/61/589, which highlights the progress achieved thus far and the challenges ahead. Similarly, my felicitations go to the European Community and India as incoming Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, with the expression of deep satisfaction that the Kimberley Process will continue to excel under their illustrious leadership.

Liberia's sponsorship of draft resolution A/61/L.27 speaks to its determination and commitment to address the ills that necessitated the imposition of sanctions by the United Nations Security Council. The draft text underscores the recognition of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme as the best alternative solution against trafficking in conflict diamonds and reaffirms the commitment of the international community to resolve the dangers posed by the illicit trading of rough diamonds. I, therefore, recommend its unanimous adoption by the Assembly.

The Government of Liberia is very pleased with the exceptional cooperation it has continued to receive from the Kimberley Process through technical support and training programmes that are aimed at capacity-building, in compliance with the requirements for lifting the sanctions on the exportation of rough diamonds. The Government is also deeply encouraged by the positive results of the assessment mission of the Kimberley Process to Liberia in May 2006. We were also pleased to participate in the recent Gaborone plenary meeting in November 2006, which afforded our Government an excellent opportunity to outline the progress achieved regarding the possibility of lifting the sanctions.

In this connection, I am pleased to reiterate some of the concrete measures that have been undertaken by the Government of Liberia relative to compliance with the Kimberley Process. These include the revision of mineral and mining regulations; the training of mineral inspectors and mining agents, in addition to those who are currently receiving diamond valuation training in Kimberley, South Africa; the construction of Government diamond offices with the assistance of De Beers and the Dubai Diamond Exchange and providing gemmology equipment and furnishings; conducting seminars for miners, brokers, dealers and exporters so as to ensure better awareness of the new regulations; the enhancement of cooperation and partnership with the United Nations Mission in Liberia, which assisted in the construction of our regional offices; developing a strict mechanism of control and

establishing a chain of custody, allowing the Government to track diamonds from mining site to exportation; and technical cooperation and the exchange of useful information between Government diamond officials from Liberia and Sierra Leone, which further strengthened the renewed cordial relations between these two Mano River Basin countries. In addition, the Government of Liberia conducted a workshop on diamonds for development in Monrovia, the purpose of which was to ensure that the proper mechanisms are implemented so as to make certain that the proceeds accrued from the sale of diamonds are not used to fuel conflicts, but rather to promote social and economic development for the Liberian people.

In addition to the aforementioned measures, the Government has identified four priority areas in the peacebuilding and recovery process, involving security, the rule of law and good governance, economic revitalization and basic services and infrastructure development.

As Liberians, we have learned from the painful experience of war. Whether rightly or wrongly, we all share a collective guilt in the systematic destruction of our beloved country, Hence, the overall task of reconstruction remains the inescapable responsibility of Liberians. Ultimately, this will require difficult choices, involving, among other things, fiscal prudence, the wise use of limited resources and the adoption of policies that are sensitive to the needs of citizens.

In essence, the efforts of the Administration are aimed at providing for the basic needs of our citizenry through the effective use of our existing resources before appealing to the goodwill of the international community. Our people are eager to reap the dividends of peace, which the Government must deliver quickly, without fail. It is in this context that, on behalf of my fellow compatriots, I call for the urgent lifting of the United Nations sanctions imposed on the exportation of rough diamonds from Liberia, which has fully complied with the requirements thereof.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania joins in thanking Mr. Festus Gontebanye Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana, for introducing the 2006 report of the Kimberley Process to this body.

Tanzania is acutely conscious of the fact that the Kimberley Process was born as a response to public revulsion and a grass-roots movement against blood diamonds — diamonds extracted from conflict zones and traded legally and illegally to finance wars in countries of origin and beyond at enormous and unconscionable sacrifice of the lives of innocent civilians, mostly women and children.

The Kimberley Process was the right thing to do. It remains the right framework to combat the trade in diamonds from conflict zones. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, which established an internationally recognized certification system for rough diamonds as well as national export and import standards, is a beginning step that deserves support from all of us.

We welcome the third-year review of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, as requested under resolution 60/182. We commend the report for its balance and objectivity. The collaboration between Governments, industry and civil society must be sustained and strengthened.

We also welcome the technical assistance rendered to enhance capacity-building for implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. This is an area of significant importance if loopholes attributable to capacity issues are to be plugged.

We also commend initiatives meant to promote public-private partnership in the diamond sector, such as the De Beers community development programme, in partnership with our Government, to benefit local populations in diamond-producing areas. This is a true illustration of the positive benefits of the legitimate diamond trade with and in producing countries. Such partnership needs to be broadened and reinforced as a way of attracting greater public confidence in the fair and equitable exploitation of resources in the interests of all stakeholders, including local communities.

We note that the 2006 report on the Kimberley Process did not seek to gloss over the deficiencies facing the mechanism. Despite a United Nations embargo, conflict diamonds continue to be traded. What needs to be done is to strengthen the Certification Scheme by promoting a rigorous monitoring and standards programme. Illegal trafficking in diamonds by rebel groups and non-State entities and their associated networks need special, coordinated

strategies by enforcement agencies involved in the process.

In Africa, the people of Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Angola have suffered immensely as a result of diamond-financed conflict. We can never do enough to alleviate their pain. However, we must never be found to have failed in establishing credible mechanisms to combat the phenomenon of blood diamonds.

The Kimberley Process is a voluntary scheme. It is not a perfect arrangement. It is something that we are able to agree on under current conditions. It is a framework we continue to strengthen and improve. We must also continue to be sensitive to our collective commitment to ensuring that natural resources are an endowment that promotes the welfare and development of countries and their peoples. A strengthened regulatory and monitoring regime will serve that objective better.

In our view, the spirit and the commitments underwriting the Kimberley Process represent a step in the right direction.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): As a participating State in the Process Certification Scheme, Sierra Leone has the honour to join in welcoming the President of Botswana, Mr. Festus G. Mogae, to the General Assembly, and to thank him for his presentation of the latest report of the Process to the Assembly. My delegation associates itself with his statement and is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution contained in document A/61/L.27.

The United Nations and the international community are aware of the painful and devastating impact that conflict or so-called blood diamonds have had on the peace, security and well-being of Sierra Leone. Indeed, it is no surprise that Sierra Leone has been used — and in many cases overused — as a typical example of the link between the illicit trade in rough diamonds, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the prolongation of armed conflicts and the systematic violations of human rights associated with such conflicts.

As a diamond-producing country, Sierra Leone has therefore faithfully participated in the Certification Scheme since its inception. We have also made our own modest contribution to the success that the Scheme continues to enjoy as a transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory, credible and pragmatic global partnership aimed at curbing and eliminating the trade in conflict diamonds. Based on our own experience, we believe that the Scheme has become a viable mechanism for the promotion of international peace, security and economic cooperation. In its capacity as a member of the sub-group on Alluvial Mining, and its coordinator for West Africa, Sierra Leone is actively involved in the exchange of views on best practices in the area of alluvial production.

Three years before the Process was established, and conscious of the negative role that diamonds were playing in fuelling the rebel war in Sierra Leone, the Government suspended the export of rough diamonds for approximately three months, in order to expedite the establishment and operation of a certification regime for rough diamonds exported from Sierra Leone. With the support of the Security Council and the assistance of the international community, including the diamond industry and non-governmental experts, the Certification of Origin regime for trade in diamonds paved the way for the adoption of a historic Security Council resolution — resolution 1306 (2000). Adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, the resolution called on all States to take the necessary measures to prohibit the direct or indirect import of all rough diamonds from Sierra Leone to their territory, except those rough diamonds controlled by the Government of Sierra Leone through the Certificate of Origin regime.

The Sierra Leone certification regime was a model for national and international efforts to curb the flow of conflict diamonds. Within a period of two years — and notwithstanding problems associated with controlling alluvial mining and with the activities of unscrupulous individuals who were determined to beat the system — the Security Council determined that certification was indeed helping to curb the illicit trade in diamonds from Sierra Leone. By 2003, the Council had found it necessary to terminate the prohibition. That was an acknowledgement of the significant progress that Sierra Leone had made in ending the conflict and extending Government authority throughout the country, including in the diamond-producing areas.

When blood diamonds are eradicated, as we hope they will be — especially from our West African subregion — there will still be a need for effective

machinery at the national, regional and international levels to ensure that the people in diamond-producing developing countries such as Sierra Leone derive more benefit from that precious mineral. With the end of the rebel war, we are making every effort to ensure that our diamonds make a positive contribution to our post-conflict reconstruction and poverty alleviation programme.

We continue to implement our diamond reform policies, including more effective internal control mechanisms. We are also taking proactive initiatives, such as the creation of the Diamond Area Community Development Fund. Although the export duty on Sierra Leone's rough and uncut diamonds is only 3 per cent of their export value, a quarter of the money we derive from the export duty is deposited in the Community Development Fund, to be used for community projects such as the rebuilding or building of schools and clinics. The Fund, which has disbursed more than $2.5 million during the past five years, also serves as a means of discouraging illicit mining and smuggling.

At the subregional level, Sierra Leone is trying to address the problem of the cross-border illicit trade in diamonds through, for example, harmonization of some of the provisions of the legal codes of the Mano River Union countries, which include Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. We consider the Subregional Conference on Diamonds for Development, held in Monrovia last June, as an important step forward in addressing some of the challenges facing the diamond industry in those three countries. High-level delegations from Guinea and Liberia have been visiting Sierra Leone to obtain, among other things, relevant information on the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme in Sierra Leone.

In that connection, Sierra Leone is pleased that Liberia has expressed interest in participating in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. We also welcome the progress reported by Liberia in establishing a national diamond certification regime that should meet the requirements of the Kimberley Process. Sierra Leone looks forward to having Liberia as a member of the West Africa subgroup on alluvial mining.

As emphasized in the latest report of the Kimberley Process (A/61/589, annex), every annual assessment since the introduction of the Process has seen significant increases in the percentage of legitimate diamond production and sales. According to the report, the Kimberley Process has had a significant impact in curbing the illicit production of and trade in diamonds in countries affected by conflict diamonds.

Sierra Leone can attest to that. Our national Certificate of Origin regime, which became operational in 2000, and the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme have made invaluable contributions to the development of our diamond production. The value of rough diamonds exported from Sierra Leone rose from $10 million in 2000 to approximately $142 million in 2005.

Other factors contributing to that positive development include the end of the rebel war and the establishment of peace; the restoration of effective Government control over the mining areas; the creation of incentives to help curb illicit mining; and international cooperation, thanks to the contributions of the United Nations, the diamond industry and civil society worldwide.

Diamonds are a precious international commodity. The legitimate trade in diamonds is international in character, and so are the illicit transactions involving rough diamonds, or so-called conflict diamonds. The first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution before the Assembly (A/61/L.27) recognizes that the trade in conflict diamonds continues to be a matter of serious international concern. Therefore, the need for continued international cooperation and action to curb the trade in conflict diamonds cannot be overemphasized.

The efficacy and the future success of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme will continue to depend on the highest level of international cooperation among producing, exporting and importing States, as well as on the contributions of regional organizations and civil society. In that regard, let me paraphrase the words of the Minister of Mineral Resources of Sierra Leone, speaking at a diamond consumer confidence workshop in Windhoek last month. He said that international cooperation is the way forward to enhance consensus and world peace. Despite the gap between developing and developed countries in terms of technological and financial status, they must all cooperate in finding solutions not only to the problems besetting the diamond industry, but also to other world problems. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme is a good example of how

problems of an international nature should be addressed.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I have the honour to speak on this important issue, on which there has been a great deal of progress in recent years. We congratulate Botswana and the European Commission on their election as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, of the Kimberley Process for 2006. Our congratulations go also to Canada on the excellent work undertaken during its chairmanship.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by His Excellency President Festus Mogae of Botswana in his capacity as Chairman of the Kimberley Process, and we express our sincere gratitude for the very clear and comprehensive report presented to us this morning. We are indeed very honoured with his presence at this important discussion.

Angola remains fully committed to working jointly with relevant governmental organizations of diamond-producing and importing countries, as well as legitimate private diamond companies and non-governmental organizations in fighting this serious scourge.

Efforts to address the problem of conflict diamonds started some time ago. In 2000, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) mining ministers, meeting in Cape Town, agreed that international action was imperative, as the problem negatively affects the trade in legitimate diamonds, which makes a critical contribution to the economies of those countries.

In this connection, when we last debated the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict, the overwhelming sense of the General Assembly was already one of satisfaction at the progress achieved by the international community through the Kimberley Process. The Assembly then welcomed in particular the introduction of a peer review system to provide assurances that all participants in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme are in fact implementing its provisions.

Today, there is no doubt at all that the Kimberley Process is indeed a tremendous success. The excellent and comprehensive report presented by Botswana (A/61/589, annex), as Chair of the Kimberly Process itself, makes clear the extent to which the Certification Scheme has modified the diamond trade at the global level. We believe that only the widest possible participation in the Certification Scheme will achieve the results we all seek: a reduction of conflict and human suffering caused by the illegal trade in diamonds and other natural resources. The Kimberley Process has, therefore, given Governments a greater degree of control over their diamond resources. It has also clamped down on smuggling, with numerous cases of illicit diamonds being seized which would otherwise have ended up illegally in world markets.

Through resolutions 55/56 and 56/263, the General Assembly has a crucial role in breaking the link between the illicit transaction in rough diamonds and armed conflict. This represents an important contribution to the prevention and settlement of armed conflicts.

The progress achieved in the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme clearly demonstrates what can be attained by the international community in addressing such issues of serious international concern as the illicit trade in diamonds. It is hoped that the United Nations will continue to support the implementation of the Kimberly Process, since it helps to ensure the effective implementation of relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions concerning the trade in conflict diamonds.

Since the very beginning, Angola has played an important role in international efforts to address the global trade in conflict diamonds, which have had a devastating impact on peace and human security in several African countries, particularly in Angola. In the case of Angola, it was important to ensure that decisions of the Security Council regarding sanctions were in fact translated into effective action. A key lesson drawn from this process concerns the measures to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the implementation of targeted sanctions, the necessary coordination among United Nations actors and the importance of sanctions committees that have the leading role in monitoring the implementation of Security Council targeted sanctions.

With the lessons learned from the implementation of international coordinated action in dealing with illicit diamond trading, particularly in Africa, at the initiative of Angola — specifically by the President of the Republic of Angola, His Excellency José Eduardo dos Santos — the African Countries Diamond

Producers Association was recently established. This organization is designed to coordinate action by African producers on the world diamond market, as well as to harmonize legislation and encourage foreign investment in the industry. This confirms the concerns of the Government of Angola in relation to the issue of the continued illegal trade of blood diamonds, particularly from Africa, as the continent accounts for nearly 60 per cent of world diamond production.

The newly established Diamond Producers Association could play a pivotal role as an institution that can bring together the producer countries and provide a forum for permanent cooperation in order to achieve sustainable growth in the industry, not only in Africa, but also in the world. In this connection, both producer and consumer countries should adopt measures to allow more active and concerted intervention with a view to transforming the gains achieved through diamonds into development.

The positive results achieved so far in the fight against conflict diamonds and the illicit trade in diamonds are evidence that the more united countries are, the better. The international community should continue to promote progress in the Kimberley Process in order to put an end to the role that diamonds play in financing wars and international terrorism.

Allow me to make a final observation. The wars that the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme was designed to tackle have now ended. But Angola believes that as a conflict prevention instrument, the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme remains vital. The draft resolution now before the General Assembly (A/61/L.27) will send a strong and clear message that the international community is not complacent regarding the continuing potential of diamonds in fuelling conflict.

We will continue to do whatever it takes to see that the issue of conflict diamonds continues to be addressed in a comprehensive manner through the implementation of the international certification scheme. We therefore look forward to the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution before us today, which we also sponsor.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3208 (XXIX) of 11 October 1974, I now call on the observer for the European Community to speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Carro Castrillo (European Community): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European economic area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Let me first welcome the excellent report of the Chair of the Kimberley Process (A/61/589, annex), His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana.

The annual debate on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict is an important opportunity for us to take stock of the progress made by the international community through the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme in combating the scourge of conflict diamonds.

This year we can, of course, draw on the findings of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme's own internal review, based on the submissions of its participating countries, civil society, industry and, importantly, some of the United Nations missions on the ground in those countries that have suffered the curse of conflict diamonds.

The core finding of this review is that the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme remains necessary. The peace in some of the countries affected by conflict diamonds, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, remains all too fragile, and the United Nations diamond embargoes against Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire would be far less effective if there were no Certification Scheme.

The review also found that the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme is effective. It is not watertight, not perfect, but it is, nonetheless, effective in fulfilling its mandate. As mentioned by the Ambassador of Angola, we should also not neglect the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme's deterrent effect, although it is, of course, harder to measure.

The review also concluded that the flexible structure of the Certification Scheme has served it well, allowing it to focus on the issues, rather than on institutional questions. We think this makes it a real

model for the international community, a mechanism that was established relatively swiftly and focused on practical and pragmatic solutions, drawing strength from its legitimacy, inclusiveness and peer pressure, as well as from the access it offers to the international rough diamond trade. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme may prove inspirational for dealing with other conflict resources, while recognizing the specificities of each context.

The review did recommend a number of improvements that could be made to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. Progress on implementing these recommendations will be a key challenge for next year.

Another challenge will be that of dealing with the situation of diamond production in the northern, rebel-held part of Côte d'Ivoire. The Kimberley Process has cooperated closely with the United Nations on this issue. The situation continues to present a very significant challenge to the Process, and indeed to peace and security in West Africa.

In the case of Ghana, the Kimberley Process has come up with an innovative way to respond to the finding by the United Nations group of experts that Ivorian diamonds may be being exported out of Ghana with a Kimberley Process Certificate. This solution protects the credibility of the Kimberley Process by providing a temporary mechanism to ensure that only stones of Ghanaian origin are exported with Ghanaian Kimberley certificates, while protecting Ghana's legitimate miners. Ghana will have a fair chance to improve its implementation, and its procedures will be evaluated after three months by a peer review mission.

Cooperation with the United Nations in this matter is crucial, as shown by these examples. We hope that the close working relationship between the Kimberley Process and the relevant bodies of the United Nations on this issue will continue over the course of the coming year. There could be no better indication of the importance of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and its inclusiveness than the continuing number of countries interested in joining. In the past year, New Zealand and Bangladesh have joined, and there are a number of others in line.

We are delighted to see the continuing progress in innovative the Kimberley Process peer review system, which has seen virtually every participant, and some applicants, invite on-the-ground monitoring and assessment of its implementation. As the Kimberley Process matures, it is starting to develop greater confidence, as demonstrated by the decision at the recent Gaborone plenary meeting to start publishing its own statistics on the international diamond trade. We hope that people will look at this data and analyse them, and come to us if they think the data indicate potential and possible implementation issues.

As for technical cooperation, the Process, under the effective coordination of the United States, has made good progress in ensuring that appropriate technical assistance, including training and geological production assessment, is made available to meet identified needs.

The European Union (EU) would like to express its gratitude to Botswana for the leadership it has displayed as Chair during the past year. Its authority has derived from its own unquestioned integrity and strong domestic controls. It has successfully steered the Kimberley Process through some turbulent times to sensible ways forward on West Africa and the review recommendations. The EU wishes to add its voice to those of other Governments, the international diamond industry and non-governmental organizations in congratulating Botswana on its achievements. Botswana, like its predecessors, South Africa, Canada and the Russian Federation, has set high standards indeed for the European Community to live up to as it succeeds those countries in the Chair of the Kimberley Process in 2007. We look forward to working closely with India, which has been appointed Vice-Chair for 2007, with all the participants and observers in the Kimberley family, and with the international community, as we build on past achievements to further strengthen implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and to confront the challenges that continue to face us, in particular with respect to Côte d'Ivoire, and any others that may arise.

Let me conclude by urging the General Assembly to reiterate its strong support for the Kimberley Process by endorsing the draft resolution. The prospect of conflict diamonds remains a potential threat in a number of cases, and an actual one in the case of Côte d'Ivoire. The support of the United Nations is necessary for the Kimberley Process to successfully confront these challenges.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/61/L.27, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts".

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of A/61/L.27: Australia, Austria, Belarus, Central African Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mauritius, Moldova, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

May I take it that the Assembly decided to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.27?

Draft resolution A/61/L.27 was adopted (resolution 61/28).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 10?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Sixth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will consider today the reports of the Sixth Committee on agenda items 33, 75 to 80, 100, 110, 118, 128, 148 and 153.

I request the Rapporteur of the Sixth Committee, Mr. Mamadou Moustapha Loum of Senegal, to introduce in one intervention the reports of the Sixth Committee before the General Assembly.

Mr. Loum (Senegal), Rapporteur of the Sixth Committee (*spoke in French*): It is my honour today to introduce to the General Assembly the reports of the Sixth Committee on the 13 agenda items referred to it, namely items 33, 75 to 80, 100, 110, 118, 128, 148 and 153. First, I will introduce the reports on items 75, 77, 80, 100, 110, 118 and 128, followed by those on items 33, 76, 78, 79, 148 and 153.

I wish first to address agenda item 75, entitled "Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/451, and the draft resolution that the Sixth Committee is recommending to the General Assembly for adoption appears in paragraph 8 of that document. By that draft resolution, the General Assembly would welcome the universal acceptance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, would call upon all States parties to the Geneva Conventions that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Additional Protocols at the earliest possible date, and would call upon States parties to the Additional Protocols to ensure their wide dissemination and full implementation.

It would also request the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-third session a report, based on information received from Member States and the International Committee of the Red Cross, on the status of the Additional Protocols relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts, as well as on measures taken to strengthen the existing body of international humanitarian law. Moreover, the Assembly would decide to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-third session the item entitled "Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts".

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote and hopes that the General Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now wish to introduce the report of the Sixth Committee on agenda item 77, entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-ninth session". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/453. The two draft resolutions that the Sixth Committee recommends be adopted by the General Assembly appear in paragraph 9 of that document.

By draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-ninth session", the General Assembly, among other things, would approve the efforts made and the initiatives taken by the Commission as the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law. It would also reaffirm the importance, in particular for developing countries, of the work of the Commission concerned with technical assistance and cooperation in the field of international trade law reform and

development. In that connection, it would appeal to Governments, the relevant bodies of the United Nations system, organizations, institutions and interested persons to make voluntary contributions to the special Trust Fund. Moreover, the Assembly would decide to continue in the competent Main Committees, its consideration of granting travel assistance to the least developed countries that are members of the Commission.

The General Assembly would encourage the Commission to further explore different approaches to the use of partnerships with non-State actors in the implementation of its mandate, in particular in the area of technical assistance. The Assembly would also welcome the preparation of digests of case law relating to texts before the Commission as well as the decision of the Commission to hold, in the context of its fortieth session, in 2007, a congress on international trade law in Vienna.

Draft resolution II under this agenda item relates to the revised articles of the Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and the recommendation regarding the interpretation of article II, paragraph 2, and article VII, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, done at New York on 10 June 1958. By this draft resolution, the General Assembly would express its appreciation to the Commission for formulating and adopting the revised articles and the recommendation, and would request the Secretary-General to make all efforts to ensure that the documents become generally known and available.

The Sixth Committee adopted the two draft resolutions without a vote and hopes the General Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

Allow me now to turn to agenda item 80, entitled "The rule of law at the national and international levels". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/456, and the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee to the General Assembly for adoption is contained in paragraph 9 of the report.

By that draft resolution, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on matters pertaining to the issues addressed in the draft resolution and to submit a report thereon at its sixty-second session.

It would also request the Secretary-General to prepare an inventory of the current activities of the various organs, bodies, offices, departments, funds and programmes within the United Nations system devoted to the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels for submission at its sixty-third session, and to submit an interim report thereon at its sixty-second session.

It further requests the Secretary-General, after having sought the views of Member States, to prepare and submit at its sixty-third session, a report identifying ways and means for strengthening and coordinating the activities in question, with special regard to the effectiveness of assistance that may be requested by States in building capacity for the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels.

By this draft resolution the General Assembly would also urge the Secretary-General, as a matter of priority, to submit the report on the establishment of a rule of law assistance unit within the Secretariat, in conformity with paragraph 134 (e) of the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote and hopes that the General Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I turn now to agenda item 100, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/457, and the draft resolution recommended to the Assembly for adoption is contained in paragraph 11 of that document.

By the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would call on all Member States, the United Nations and other appropriate international, regional and subregional organizations to implement the United Nations Global Anti-Terrorism Strategy in all its aspects without delay, and would recall its pivotal role in the implementation and updating of the Strategy. It would also recall its invitation to the Secretary-General to contribute to the future deliberations and request him when doing so to provide information on relevant activities within the Secretariat to ensure overall coordination and coherence in the counter-terrorism efforts of the United Nations system. Furthermore, the Assembly would decide that the Ad Hoc Committee established by resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996 shall meet on 5, 6 and 15 February 2007 to continue on

an expedited basis to elaborate the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism and to discuss the question of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote and hopes that the General Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now draw attention to agenda item 110, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/458, and the draft decision that the Sixth Committee is recommending to the General Assembly for adoption appears in paragraph 7 of that document, by which the General Assembly would note that the Sixth Committee has decided to adopt its provisional programme of work for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, as proposed by the Bureau. According to the provisional programme of work, the Committee would begin work on 8 October 2007 and would complete its next session on 16 November 2007.

The Sixth Committee adopted its provisional programme of work for the sixty-second session without a vote, and I hope that the General Assembly will be in a position to do the same, by adopting the draft decision contained in paragraph 7 of the report.

Concerning agenda item 118, entitled "Programme planning", the relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/459. The Sixth Committee considered the item and concluded that the subject did not call for any decision to be taken by the Committee. Accordingly, there is no draft resolution on the item.

Concerning agenda item 128, entitled "Administration of justice at the United Nations", the relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/460. The draft decision adopted by the Sixth Committee appears in paragraph 10 of the report.

By that decision, the Sixth Committee would hold a resumed session of 10 meetings in March 2007, to consider the legal aspects of the report of the Redesign Panel on the United Nations system of administration of justice (A/61/205), taking into account, as appropriate, the comments that will be made by the Secretary-General on that subject, as well as those that may be made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote and hopes that the General Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

(*spoke in English*)

I invite the Assembly to consider agenda item 33, entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/450, and the draft resolution that the Sixth Committee is recommending to the General Assembly for adoption appears in paragraph 7 of that document. Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, inter alia, decide to establish an Ad Hoc Committee open to all State Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency, for the purpose of considering the report of the Group of Legal Experts established by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 59/300 to provide advice on the best way to succeed so as to ensure that the original intent of the Charter of United Nations can be achieved, namely that United Nations staff and experts on mission would never be effectively exempt from the consequences of criminal acts committed at their duty station, or unjustly penalized, in accordance with due process. The Ad Hoc Committee would meet from 9 to 13 April 2007 and would report on its work to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, under the item entitled "Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission". The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I turn now to agenda item 76, entitled "Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/452, and the draft resolution that the Sixth Committee recommends to the Assembly for adoption is set out in paragraph 7 of that document.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, inter alia, strongly condemn acts of violence against diplomatic and consular missions and representatives, as well as against missions and representatives of international intergovernmental organizations and officials of such organizations, and would urge States to take all appropriate measures at the national and international levels to prevent any

such acts of violence and to ensure, with the participation of the United Nations where appropriate, that such acts are fully investigated with a view to bringing offenders to justice.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now invite the Assembly's attention to agenda item 78, entitled "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-eighth session". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/61/454 and the three draft resolutions recommended to the Assembly for adoption are reproduced in paragraph 13 of that document.

By the terms of draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-eighth session", the General Assembly would, inter alia, take note of the report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-eighth session and recommend that the Commission continue its work on the topics in its current programme, taking into account the observations of Governments, whether submitted in writing or expressed orally in debates in the General Assembly. The Assembly would also express its appreciation for the work accomplished by the Commission at its fifty-eighth session, noting in particular its various accomplishments. The Assembly would also draw the attention of Governments to the importance for the Commission of having their views on various topics on its agenda, as requested in chapter III of the 2006 report of the Commission, including in particular the draft articles and commentaries on the law of transboundary aquifers as well as information on legislation and practice on the topic of "The obligation to extradite or prosecute". Moreover, the Assembly would take note of the inclusion of five new topics in the Commission's long-term programme of work.

The Assembly would also address organizational matters concerning the working methods of the Commission, the structure of the Commission's report and conference servicing issues, in the light of previous decisions made by the Assembly concerning the documentation and summary records of the Commission. The Commission would meet at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 7 May to 8 June and from 9 July to 10 August 2007.

Moreover, the draft resolution refers to the improvements in the relationship between the Sixth Committee and the Commission, welcomes and encourages the improved dialogue, including informal consultations, and encourages delegations to adhere to the structured work programme in the debate on the Commission's report. It recommends that the debate on the report of the Commission at its fifty-ninth session commence on 29 October 2007.

By the terms of draft resolution II, entitled "Diplomatic protection", the General Assembly would express its appreciation to the International Law Commission for its continuing contribution to the codification and progressive development of international law, take note of the draft articles on diplomatic protection presented by the Commission and invite Governments to submit reports concerning the recommendation by the Commission to elaborate a convention on the basis of its draft articles. The Assembly would also decide to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-second session an item entitled "Diplomatic protection".

Draft resolution III is entitled "Allocation of loss in the case of transboundary harm arising out of hazardous activities". By its terms, the Assembly would again express its appreciation to the Commission for its continuing contribution to the codification and progressive development of international law, take note of the principles on the allocation of loss in the case of transboundary harm arising out of hazardous activities, which appear in the annex, and commend them to the attention of Governments. It would also decide to include an item entitled "Consideration of prevention of transboundary harm from hazardous activities and allocation of loss in the case of such harm" in the provisional agenda of its sixty-second session.

The Sixth Committee adopted the three draft resolutions without a vote and it is hoped that the Assembly will do likewise.

I now draw the attention of the Assembly to agenda item 79, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization". The report of the Sixth Committee on this item is contained in document A/61/455. The Sixth Committee recommends for adoption by the General Assembly

two draft resolutions, contained in paragraph 13 of the report.

Under the terms of the preamble of the draft resolution I, entitled "Commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the International Court of Justice", the Assembly would, inter alia, note that 2006 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the Court's inaugural sitting.

By operative paragraphs of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, inter alia, solemnly commend the International Court of Justice for the important role that it has played as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations over the past 60 years in adjudicating disputes among States, and express its appreciation to the Court for the measures adopted to operate an increased workload with maximum efficiency.

Furthermore, the Assembly would encourage States to continue considering recourse to the Court by means available under its Statute, and call upon States that have not yet done so to consider accepting the jurisdiction of the Court in accordance with its Statute. It would also call upon States to consider means of strengthening the Court's work, including by supporting the Secretary-General's Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the International Court of Justice.

Under terms of draft resolution II, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization", the General Assembly, among other things, would note with appreciation the adoption of the working methods of the Special Committee, contained in paragraph 72 of its 2006 report.

In addition, the Assembly would request the Special Committee, at its next session in 2007, to continue its consideration of all proposals concerning the question of the maintenance of international peace and security in all its aspects in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations. The Special Committee would also be requested to continue to consider, on a priority basis and in appropriate substantive manner and framework, the question of the implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter, and to consider, also on a priority basis, ways and means of improving its working methods and enhancing its efficiency with a view to identifying widely acceptable measures for future implementation. It would also be requested to keep on its agenda the question of the peaceful settlement of disputes between States.

Furthermore, the Special Committee would be requested to consider, as appropriate, any proposal referred to it by the General Assembly in the implementation of the decisions of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, in September 2005, that concern the Charter of the United Nations and any amendments thereto.

Additionally, the Assembly would commend the Secretary-General for the progress made in the preparation of studies of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*, including the increased use of the internship programme of the United Nations and the wider cooperation with academic institutions for this purpose, as well as the progress made towards updating the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*. It would also call upon the Secretary-General to continue his efforts towards updating the two publications.

Let me now turn to agenda item 148, "Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country". The report of the Sixth Committee on this item is contained in document A/61/461. The draft resolution recommended to the Assembly for adoption is set out in paragraph 8 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, inter alia, endorse the recommendations and conclusions of the Host Country Committee; consider that the maintenance of appropriate conditions for the normal work of the delegations and the missions accredited to the United Nations and the observance of their privileges and immunities are in the interest of the Organization and all Member States; and request the host country to continue to solve, through negotiations, problems that might arise, and to take all measures necessary to prevent any interference with the functioning of missions.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. It is hoped that the Assembly will be in a position to do likewise.

I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to agenda item 153, "Requests for observer status in the General Assembly". The relevant Committee report is contained in document A/61/462, and the three draft

resolutions recommended to the General Assembly for adoption are reproduced in paragraph 11 thereof.

By draft resolutions I, II and III entitled, respectively, "Observer status for the OPEC Fund for International Development in the General Assembly", "Observer status for the Indian Ocean Commission in the General Assembly" and "Observer status for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the General Assembly", the General Assembly would decide to invite, respectively, the OPEC Fund for International Development, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to participate in the sessions and the work of the Assembly in the capacity of observer. It would also request the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolutions.

These three draft resolutions were adopted by the Sixth Committee without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

(*spoke in French*)

This concludes my introduction to the reports of the Sixth Committee. Allow me at this stage, to express my great gratitude to the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Juan Manuel Gómez Robledo of Mexico, for his tireless efforts and the efficiency and energy, which he brought to his guidance of the Sixth Committee at this session. I should also like to thank the other members of the Bureau — particularly Mr. Ganeson Sivagurunathan of Malaysia, Mr. Theodor Cosmin Onisii of Romania and Mr. Stefan Barriga of Liechtenstein — for their very valuable cooperation and support. Finally, I wish to thank all delegations and all of my colleagues whose essential contributions ensured the success of the Commission at its present session. And I cannot forget to pay special tribute to the Secretariat, whose dedication and professionalism have been of invaluable assistance.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Sixth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Sixth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in the plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Sixth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Sixth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance. I therefore hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Sixth Committee.

Agenda item 33

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/450)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Sixth committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission". The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 61/29).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 33.

Agenda item 75

Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/451)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 61/30).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 75?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 76

Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/452)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 61/31).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 76?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 77

Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-ninth session

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/453)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report. We will now take decisions on draft resolutions I and II.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-ninth session". The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 61/32).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Revised articles of the Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and the recommendation regarding the interpretation of article II, paragraph 2, and article VII, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, done at New York, 10 June 1958". The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 61/33).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 77?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 78

Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-eighth session

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/454)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it three draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 13 of its report. We will now take a decision on draft resolutions I, II and III.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-eighth session". The Sixth Committee adopted

it without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 61/34).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Diplomatic protection". The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 61/35).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Allocation of loss in the case of transboundary harm arising out of hazardous activities". The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 61/36).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 78?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 79

Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/455)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 13 of its report. We will now take a decision on draft resolutions I and II.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the International Court of Justice". The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 61/37).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization". The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 61/38).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 79?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 80

The rule of law at the national and international levels

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/456)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 61/39).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 80?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 100

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/457)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 61/40).

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Gómez González (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela joined the consensus on the draft resolution in paragraph 11 of the report of the Sixth Committee contained in document A/61/457, on measures to eliminate international terrorism. However, we would like to point out that in the twenty-first preambular paragraph, which refers to recent developments and initiatives at the regional and subregional level to prevent and suppress international terrorism, the reference to a military organization — the North Atlantic Treaty Organization — does not imply that the perspectives of such an organization should be accepted. Nor, in my delegation's opinion, should it set a precedent for future consideration of this very important issue. My delegation will continue to provide support in the quest for a global consensus that allows for concrete and concerted actions to combat international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 100.

Agenda item 110

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/458)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft decision recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

We will now take action on the draft decision. The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Provisional programme of work of the Sixth Committee for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 110.

Agenda item 118

Programme planning

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/459)

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the report of the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda item 128

Administration of justice at the United Nations

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/460)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft decision recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

We will now take action on the draft decision. The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 128.

Agenda item 148

Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/461)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 61/41).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 148?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 153

Requests for observer status in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/61/462)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it three draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report. We will now take a decision on draft resolutions I, II and III.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Observer status for the OPEC Fund for International Development in the General Assembly". The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 61/42).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Observer status for the Indian Ocean Commission in the General Assembly". The Sixth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 61/43).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Observer status for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the General Assembly". The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 61/44).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 153.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Sixth Committee before it.

Agenda item 44 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolution (A/61/L.16)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held its debate on agenda item 44 at its 47th and 48th plenary meetings, held on 3 November 2006.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/61/L.16. The Assembly will take action on draft resolution A/61/L.16, entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010".

I wish to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.16?

Draft resolution A/61/L.16 was adopted (resolution 61/45).

The Acting President: I wish to inform Member States that action on draft resolution A/61/L.11 will be taken at a later date, to be announced.

The General Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 44.

Agenda item 108 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Draft resolution (A/61/L.13)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held its debate on agenda item 108 and its sub-items (a) to (t) at its 38th and 39th plenary meetings, held on 20 October 2006.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.13.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/61/L.13, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations", sponsored by the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, and sponsored also by 72 other countries from the Asia-Pacific region, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, which are listed in documents A/61/L.13 and A/61/L.13/Add.1.

ASEAN is a dynamic, outward-looking organization with a long history of close relations with various countries and regional and international organizations, in particular the United Nations. Home to more than 500 million people representing 8 per cent of the world population, with a combined gross domestic product of almost $900 billion and total trade of over $1 trillion, ASEAN has a significant impact on world affairs, both politically and economically.

ASEAN was founded on the same principles as those guiding the United Nations. In their relations with one another, ASEAN member countries exhibit mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations; recognize the right of every State to a national existence free from external interference, subversion and coercion; adopt a policy of non-interference in one another's internal affairs; settle differences and disputes by peaceful means; renounce the threat or use of force; and undertake effective cooperation among themselves.

ASEAN and the United Nations have had a long history together, having begun their relationship, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), when ASEAN was first established in 1967. In the four decades that have since elapsed, that relationship has been nurtured and developed. The first ASEAN-United Nations Summit, held at Bangkok on 12 February 2000, and the adoption of two General Assembly resolutions on ASEAN–United Nations cooperation, in 2002 and 2004, have also served to elevate and strengthen the relationship.

The second ASEAN-United Nations Summit, held on 13 September 2005 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, further enhanced that relationship and provided future direction for cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations. During the Summit, ASEAN leaders and the United Nations Secretary-General agreed to further broaden ASEAN-United Nations cooperation with the involvement of various United Nations specialized agencies on key issues related to development, such as poverty eradication, the Millennium Development Goals, energy security, the prevention and control of infectious diseases, disaster management, trans-national issues, and peace and security. We would like to highlight the progress that has been made so far in the context of cooperation in those areas.

In the area of development, UNDP, in conjunction with ASEAN, continues to conduct training programmes and workshops to strengthen the capacities of Member States in designing and formulating project proposals as well as manage the regional integration process in accordance with various ASEAN plans of action.

On energy security, United Nations agencies have been working with ASEAN to find appropriate ways and means to strengthen international efforts to promote the more efficient use of energy. The ASEAN Centre for Energy is currently closely cooperating with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNDP on various projects such as energy-integrated urban planning and the promotion of local manufacturing of renewable energy equipment in ASEAN.

In the area of health, ASEAN's closer collaboration with the relevant United Nations agencies has resulted in greater assistance in

preventing and controlling resurging infectious diseases.

As concerns disaster management, ASEAN and the United Nations, through the support and assistance of UNDP, are discussing the implementation of humanitarian emergency response coordination in disaster-relief operations and in public awareness and capacity-building, as agreed at the Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami.

On peace and security, ASEAN continues to support the United Nations in its role of maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and achieving international cooperation in the resolution of international problems. ASEAN initiatives such as the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Plus Three process, the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and regional actions undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations with regard to Cambodia and East Timor, have significantly contributed to peace, security and stability in the region.

This year, ASEAN has been granted observer status in the General Assembly, which will further deepen cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations. ASEAN's status as an observer in the United Nations will also broaden and deepen ASEAN's interaction with other United Nations Member States and regional and international organizations in their common pursuit of peace, justice and the rule of law.

We are extremely grateful to all those countries which have sponsored the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and ASEAN. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as was the previous one during the fifty-ninth session.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations A/61/PV.65

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-first session

65th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 5 December 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Mladineo (Croatia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 108 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Draft resolution A/61/L.13)

(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community

Draft resolution (A/61/L.29)

(q) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Draft resolution (A/61/L.26)

(r) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Draft resolution (A/61/L.20/Rev.1)

(s) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Draft resolution (A/61/L.18)

(t) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community

Draft resolution (A/61/L.37)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, who will introduce draft resolution A/61/L.18.

Mr. Onishenko (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine, in its capacity as Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), would like to introduce a draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty Organization", which is contained in document A/61/L.18.

The latest developments in the field of non-proliferation represent a tough challenge for the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, an accredited international body in this sphere, and for its evolving monitoring and verification machinery. Recent events have renewed the increased attention of the world community to the role of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation, which remains one of the most important challenges facing humankind today.

Ukraine, which has made a crucial contribution to achieving this goal, was among the very first nations to sign and ratify the CTBT, and we implement our obligations and commitments under the global non-proliferation regime. Therefore, we feel a special

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responsibility in this respect and steadfastly support the efforts of our other partners and the CTBTO Preparatory Commission in promoting the Treaty.

In this regard, we welcome the recent ratification of the Treaty by new States parties and call on other States to follow that lead. We also appreciate the work of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and its activities, its Executive Secretary and all the relevant efforts of the Provisional Technical Secretariat. We call on all delegations to support the draft resolution.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Fiji, who will introduce draft resolution A/61/L.20/Rev.1.

Mr. Kau (Fiji): As Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum group of countries here in New York — namely, Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Fiji — I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.20/Rev.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum", under agenda item 108 (r).

Too often, the issues affecting the Pacific island countries are not on the radar screen of the United Nations. I must bear testimony to this Assembly that we do have serious issues affecting the people of the Pacific region. Such issues include the eradication of poverty, the struggle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, coping with the adverse effects of environmental degradation, the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the maintenance of peace and security and other challenges presented by our particular vulnerabilities.

Efforts to achieve economic growth, attracting trade and investment, protecting our rich fisheries and marine resources and the attainment of sustainable development goals are also challenges facing the countries of the region. Difficulties in addressing these and other important issues are compounded by a lack of technical expertise, institutional and administrative capacity, as well as financial and other resource constraints.

This is no exaggeration, as we heard from the United Nations Development Programme Administrator, Mr. Kemal Dervis, last Monday, 27 November 2006, during the General Assembly's informal thematic debate on the Millennium Development Goals: "The biggest problems on the road to the MDGs are experienced in sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania where, on current trends, none of the goals are likely to be met, on average".

This situation is of extreme concern to the Pacific island countries. We must avoid the business-as-usual approach and scale up efforts by undertaking concrete actions that pave the way for Pacific island countries to achieve the MDGs.

The Pacific island countries are committed individually and collectively as a region to addressing these important issues. In the area of peace and security, our collective desire to deal with important issues affecting countries in the region has been manifested in the restoration of peace and normalcy on the island of Bougainville, in Papua New Guinea, and in our collective efforts in support of the consolidation of law and order, the revitalization of the economy and the strengthening of the Government machinery in Solomon Islands.

Regional mechanisms are also put in place to pursue issues of collective interests to countries of the region. Regional organizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Forum Fisheries Agency, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, support Pacific island countries in addressing their specific environments, sustainable development, economic growth, governance and peace and security needs.

An important vehicle for regional cooperation in addressing the aforementioned issues is the Pacific Plan, which is the overarching framework for collaboration and cooperation among Pacific Islands Forum countries in the areas of security, good governance, economic growth and sustainable development in the region. At the recently concluded 37th Pacific Islands Forum meeting, held in Nadi, Fiji, from 24 to 25 October 2006, Forum leaders made important decisions to undertake concrete actions to advance the implementation of the Pacific Plan. Such critical efforts require the support of the United Nations and other development partners.

With the challenges facing the Pacific Island countries, we count on the valuable support of the United Nations system in addressing these issues. In this context, we fully support the ongoing collaboration

between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum. I wish particularly to note the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General in instituting regular consultations with regional organizations; these have been vital for fostering closer partnership in vital strategic areas.

The draft resolution is aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two organizations in addressing issues affecting individual countries, the Pacific region and the international community at large. Further, it reflects priority areas of concern and challenges facing the countries of the region, which can be addressed in partnership with and with the support of the international community, including the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders.

Issues reflected in the draft resolution requiring collaboration between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum include: combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic and addressing related issues; achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and implementing other important instruments, such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Mauritius Strategy; combating international global terrorism through, inter alia, the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; maintaining international peace and security, including through conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities; combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons through, inter alia, implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; implementing the Secretary-General's decision to establish an expanded and joint in-country presence of the United Nations in Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu; and supporting initiatives to enhance South-South cooperation among Pacific island countries and with other developing countries.

At this juncture, I must express our profound gratitude and appreciation to the countries that have joined the Pacific Islands Forum Group in sponsoring the draft resolution, namely, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Israel, the Philippines, Romania, Saint Lucia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Ukraine, the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We believe that the adoption of the draft resolution by the General Assembly would undoubtedly strengthen the ongoing collaboration and cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum. I would therefore urge all Members of the United Nations to show solidarity with the Pacific Islands Forum Group in demonstrating unanimous support for the adoption of this draft resolution.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.29.

Mrs. Ferrari (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I have the honour to introduce, for the consideration of the General Assembly, the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community", which is before the Assembly in document A/61/L.29. I do so on behalf of the following sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report regarding cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations (A/61/256), in particular section IV thereof, pertaining to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which was prepared pursuant to paragraph 10 of resolution 59/138 of 10 December 2004. The report outlines various aspects of cooperation between the secretariats of the United Nations and CARICOM, which involves an active process of consultation and exchange of information. That cooperation is important to the economic and social development of the Caribbean subregion.

In its preambular section, the draft resolution stresses the importance of regional organizations in furthering the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security, within the context of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. It draws attention to two initiatives of particular interest to the Caribbean Community: first, the importance of adopting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development; and secondly, the necessity of implementing the Barbados Programme of Action on small island developing States. It notes the unique

vulnerability of the Caribbean region to devastating hazards and reaffirms the need to strengthen existing cooperation in areas related to economic and social development, particularly HIV/AIDS, comprehensive disaster management and climate change.

In its operative section, the draft resolution takes note of the Secretary-General's report and encourages him, in association with the CARICOM Secretary-General, to continue to assist in furthering the development and maintenance of peace and security within the Caribbean region. It urges the specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations and programmes to cooperate in order to initiate, maintain and increase consultations and programmes with the Caribbean Community and its associated institutions in the attainment of their objectives.

The draft resolution invites the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as Member States, to increase financial and other assistance to Caribbean countries to help to implement the priorities of the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework, particularly with regard to HIV/AIDS. It calls upon the United Nations, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to assist the countries of the region in addressing the social and economic consequences of the vulnerability of Caribbean economies. It reaffirms the objective of strengthening the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and welcomes the initiatives of Member States in assisting in the cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community.

The draft resolution recommends that the fourth general meeting between representatives of the two organizations be held in the Caribbean area in early 2007 in order to review and appraise progress in the implementation of the agreed areas and issues. Finally, it requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session and decides to include an item on the subject in the provisional agenda of that session.

The purpose of the draft resolution is to seek further to develop the process of cooperation and collaboration between the United Nations system and the Caribbean Community. We believe that that goal will attract wide and generous support in the General Assembly.

In that connection, I would like to thank the following countries, which have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Comoros, Cuba, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Thailand, Tuvalu, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The sponsors hope that, as with similar texts in previous years, the draft resolution can be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lesotho to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.37.

Mr. Maema (Lesotho): On behalf of the States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), namely, Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own country, Lesotho, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.37, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community", under sub-item (t) of agenda item 108, "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations".

First of all, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), let me express our sincere appreciation to all the delegations that participated in the informal consultations on the draft resolution and to those countries that joined in sponsoring it. We invite other delegations to do the same.

In this year's draft resolution, SADC reaffirms its commitment to enhanced cooperation with the United Nations and its related agencies, funds and programmes, as well as with development partners. We welcome continued efforts in the maintenance and strengthening of such cooperation.

The draft resolution takes note of the high prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as the adverse social and economic consequences of other communicable diseases in the region, such as malaria and tuberculosis. SADC solicits stronger support and assistance from the United Nations and the international community as a whole to fight the scourge.

The draft resolution also takes note of the continued efforts of SADC countries to make Southern Africa a landmine-free zone. We reiterate our appeal to the United Nations and its related bodies, as well as to

the international community, to support and assist SADC in its efforts to rid the region of landmines.

The vulnerability of the SADC subregion to natural disasters is also highlighted in the draft resolution. In this regard, we also appeal to the international community to assist SADC in strengthening its disaster preparedness and early warning capacity.

The Southern African Development Community is convinced that, following the recent election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, appeals to members of the international community are necessary in order to continue to contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in that country and to extend increased humanitarian, financial and other relevant forms of assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Congolese people.

The draft resolution welcomes the decision of the summit of SADC heads of State and Government that was held in Lesotho in August 2006 to convene a SADC conference on poverty and development. Members of the international community would be invited to participate in the Conference.

The draft resolution welcomes progress made by SADC towards achieving the target of 30 per cent representation of women in decision-making as well as SADC's new target of 50 per cent. Furthermore, the draft resolution takes note of SADC's commitment to launch a free trade area by 2008, and its preparations for a customs union by 2010.

Finally, let me express once again our appreciation to those countries that joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. SADC hopes that, as was the case with resolution 59/140, on cooperation between the United Nations and SADC, this year's draft resolution will also be adopted by consensus.

The following Member States have joined the list of sponsors of the draft resolution: Comoros, the Czech Republic and Honduras.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/61/L.13, A/61/L.18, A/61/L.20/Rev.1, A/61/L.26, A/61/L.29 and A/61/L.37.

We turn first to draft resolution A/61/L.13, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations". I would like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/61/L.13, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Grenada, Guinea, Honduras, Iran, Jordan, Montenegro, Nauru, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, the Sudan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Yemen.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.13?

Draft resolution A/61/L.13 was adopted (resolution 61/46).

The Acting President: We now turn to draft resolution A/61/L.18, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization". I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/61/L.18, the following countries have become sponsors: Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Monaco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab

Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

United States of America

Draft resolution A/61/L.18 was adopted by 133 votes to 1 (resolution 61/47).

[Subsequently the delegations of Albania, Bangladesh and Mexico informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution A/61/L.20/Rev.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/61/L.20/Rev.1, the following countries have become sponsors: Algeria, Chile, the Comoros, the Dominican Republic, Guinea, Honduras, Italy, Nepal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.20/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/61/L.20/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 61/48).

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution A/61/L.26, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Brunei Darussalam, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.26?

Draft resolution A/61/L.26 was adopted (resolution 61/49).

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution A/61/L.29, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, Chile has become a sponsor.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.29?

Draft resolution A/61/L.29 was adopted (resolution 61/50).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/61/L.37, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, Madagascar has become a sponsor.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.37?

Draft resolution A/61/L.37 was adopted (resolution 61/51).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position on the draft resolutions just adopted, I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Jokinen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Montenegro and Serbia, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Although the European Union was able to join the consensus today on the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, contained in

document A/61/L.26, we would like to make clear our views of a technical nature on one very important issue.

The European Union is consistently opposed to the inclusion in draft resolutions adopted by the United Nations of references to documents expressing political commitments or other matters of a purely internal nature that have been agreed within other organizations, whether regional, cross-regional or confessional. Such commitments have been subscribed to only by the members of those organizations. They have not been subject to a process of intergovernmental negotiation within the United Nations, and thus have no place in United Nations resolutions.

The primary objective of resolutions such as the one adopted earlier on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference is the reaffirmation by the wider United Nations membership of its willingness to pursue cooperation of that nature. Such cooperation cannot take place otherwise than in full adherence to the Charter of the United Nations, and the commitments expressed in such resolutions must likewise be consistent with the principles of the Charter.

It is on that basis, and on the clear understanding that the contents of the resolution create no precedent for the future, that the European Union was able to join the consensus on the resolution today.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): Solomon Islands is a sponsor of draft resolution A/61/L.20/Rev.1, under sub-item (r) — "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Island Forum" — of agenda item 108, and sincerely thanks all of the sponsors of the draft resolution. However, we would like to explain our position on the resolution, in particular in connection with operative paragraphs 3, 4, 10 and 13.

My delegation feels that the resolution could have been broadened to conform to existing regional frameworks and the realities of developments in the region. In paragraph 3, Solomon Islands would have liked to see cooperation between the United Nations and the Forum extended and widened beyond the Secretary General of the Forum secretariat. My delegation would prefer that the United Nations be flexible enough to deal with Forum island States and development-oriented Pacific island institutions, including the Pacific Island Community and the Forum Fisheries Agency.

Solomon Islands' comments on paragraph 4 relate to development in context. Only last week it was reported that the Pacific is not likely to meet its Millennium Development Goals. My delegation would have liked to see stronger development-oriented language consistent with the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and the Pacific Plan's four pillars: economic growth, sustainable development, governance and security. However, governance and security have taken prominence. As stated by Solomon Islands in its national statement during the general debate, its concern is that the United Nations has conducted eight workshops in the Pacific region — all on governance and security, and none on development.

With regard to paragraph 10, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands has contributed to peace and stability in Solomon Islands. It is an excellent regional mechanism. However, like all new concepts, it has its own teething problems and needs fine-tuning. In this regard, Pacific leaders, at their recent meeting in October, called for its review, with a view to strengthening partnership between the Solomon Islands Government and its people. That development, however, was omitted from the draft resolution.

On paragraph 13, my delegation would have liked to see the United Nations not restricted to carrying out joint regional cooperative needs assessment missions, but open to carrying out independent missions where appropriate, especially in response to requests by Member States, in the areas of peacebuilding, development and other economic and social challenges. We must, as far as we can, not allow problems to grow but, where possible, resolve them, especially when they are beyond reach of regional efforts.

Solomon Islands assures the Assembly that it attaches great importance to the resolution. Its comments do not affect its association with the rest of the text of the resolution. My delegation would like to conclude by assuring the Assembly of its support for closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific region.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (c), (e), (q), (r), (s) and (t) of agenda item 108?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 43 (*continued*)

Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Draft resolution (A/61/L.15/Rev.1)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate under this agenda item at its 47th plenary meeting, on 3 November 2006.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Chief, General Assembly Affairs Branch): In connection with draft resolution A/61/L.15/Rev.1, I wish to inform members of a small correction to operative paragraph 16. In the last line of operative paragraph 16, the word "non-binding" should be inserted before the words "standard-setting instrument".

Paragraph 16 should thus now read as follows,

> "Notes the decision taken by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in its resolution 33 C/45 of 20 October 2005 that the subject of cultural objects displaced in connection with the Second World War should be the subject of a non-binding standard-setting instrument."

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/61/L.15/Rev.1, as orally corrected.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/61/L.15/Rev.1, the following countries have become sponsors: Algeria, Angola, Belarus, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Canada, the Central African Republic, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Moldova, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Serbia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Ukraine and Yemen.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.15/Rev.1, as orally corrected?

> *Draft resolution A/61/L.15/Rev.1, as orally corrected, was adopted* (resolution 61/52).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, who wishes to speak explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the efforts of the international community to preserve cultural property. We note the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in this field. But now we would like to convey to the members of the General Assembly our understanding of operative paragraph 16 of the draft resolution.

The Russian Federation believes that the reference therein to resolution 33 C/45 of the General Conference of UNESCO of 20 October 2005, on the subject of cultural objects displaced in connection with the Second World War, does not contain any judgment on the part of the General Assembly on that decision and does not predetermine the final outcome of UNESCO's work.

We call upon the intergovernmental organs of UNESCO to carefully go into the details of this issue and to take the best possible decision in the light of national legislation and the practice of States, bearing in mind also both the positive and the negative consequences of attempts to universalize this problem.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote. I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. George Voulgarakis, Minister of Culture of Greece.

Mr. Voulgarakis (Greece): I am grateful for the opportunity to address the General Assembly for the purpose of expressing the sincere thanks and gratitude of my Government for the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution on the "Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin". The adoption by consensus of the draft resolution and its sponsorship by a great number of delegations clearly manifest its importance to the international community and the clear intention of all of us to promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation for resolving outstanding issues.

At the core of the efforts towards the protection of cultural heritage lies the consistent and hard work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO). At this point, I would like to express the appreciation of my Government to the Director-General, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, for his work.

Illegal trading in antiquities falls into the same category as the illegal trade in arms or drugs or trafficking in human beings. It constitutes a form of organized crime directly associated with money-laundering and corruption. It is a crime committed against every one of us. It is not directed only against those nations whose cultural heritage is looted, but against the whole of mankind.

With the destruction of monuments, vital information is lost. Art works are deprived of their natural historical context and are reduced to simple objects of ornament. They are neutralized. They cease to exist as integral elements of cultural unity. They no longer testify as to our origins and identities.

Humankind, deprived of its cultural identity, is destitute. Cut off from its natural cultural habitat, humankind is unable to understand phenomena relating to its progressive development.

Yet, in recent years, a new wind of optimism has appeared on the horizon. Increasingly, museums recognize the moral obligation to conform with ethical codes in their acquisition policies. In the international scientific community, including archaeologists, voices have been raised for the protection of cultural heritage worldwide. Demands have been expressed that the looting of archaeological sites and the illicit trafficking in antiquities must stop. New strict laws are being passed; recently, Switzerland and Great Britain have begun moving in this direction. Finally, international public opinion and public sentiment have alerted the press, especially after the destruction of monuments and archaeological sites in Afghanistan and Iraq.

This necessity is reflected and embodied in today's resolution. Greece took the initiative for the proposal of this resolution in an effort to signify the important need for the protection of cultural heritage. It reflects initiatives set forth on the national level through treaties, conventions and the policies of UNESCO.

It promotes cooperation between nations of the United Nations and UNESCO with the aim to preserve the cultural heritage of humankind in the timeless humanitarian values it represents. It provides for the return and the restitution of cultural treasures illegally removed from their place of origin.

In this era of globalization, it is important for nations to be able to preserve their historical cultural identity. It is obvious that this cooperation and cultural exchange should be based on moral principle and ethical codes of conduct.

Greece, in cooperation with other nations and institutions, has to date successfully retrieved a number of antiquities exiled abroad. Recently, two important antiquities held by the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles were repatriated, while negotiations for the return of two more items from that museum are currently in progress. In addition, two important fragments from the Acropolis — one from the Parthenon frieze — have been returned. I would like to thank Heidelberg University for that gesture as well as the Swedish collector involved. They both realized the need for the reunification of the parts of one of the most important cultural sites in the world. Those returns confirm the need for the preservation of that monument, which, of course, is in Greece, but belongs to the world as a whole.

The Parthenon sculptures remain dispersed and divided. The uniqueness of the Parthenon, as a monumental symbol of Western civilization, is the critical argument for the return of its parts, and the demand for their return is ecumenical. Now that the construction of the new Acropolis museum is almost complete, it is our ambition that the new museum shelter all extant parts of the Parthenon, and it is expected to include the sculptures we claim must be returned by the British Museum.

The reunification and restitution of antiquities serves to complete a cultural mosaic which has been disrupted and lies today in disarray. The image presented by that mosaic, owing to the plundering of some of its integral parts, has become distorted and misleading — even traumatic. By protecting the cultural heritage of each nation, we will be providing a solid foundation not just for the present but also for posterity and for future generations. The cultural heritage of each nation is, of course, the cultural heritage of humankind, and all humankind must respond to this responsibility to protect that legacy.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 43?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 46

Follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS

Draft decision (A/61/L.40)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/61/L.40, entitled "International Voluntary HIV Counselling and Testing Day".

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft decision A/61/L.40, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft: Barbados, Cambodia, Comoros, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Grenada, Honduras, Israel, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda and Viet Nam.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/61/L.40?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: I shall now give the floor to those representatives wishing to make statements in explanation of position on the decision just adopted.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Tarragô (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of MERCOSUR, namely Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela and Brazil, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

I am taking the floor to make a statement in explanation of position on behalf of MERCOSUR and associated States following the adoption of draft decision A/61/L.40, entitled "International Voluntary HIV Counselling and Testing Day".

MERCOSUR and associated States believe that combating HIV/AIDS requires broad-based and coordinated policies aimed at attaining, by 2010, universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support. In that regard, MERCOSUR and associated States promote regular voluntary testing campaigns, in accordance with their respective public programmes, epidemiological status and specific needs.

I should like to thank the main sponsor of the draft for having promoted discussion on voluntary counselling and testing, although we would have welcomed the submission of this important document to all States Members of the United Nations for open consultations. We are of the view that the decision just adopted provides us with an important opportunity to engage in a discussion on national counselling and testing strategies. Such strategies must encompass full respect for the human rights of the individuals undergoing testing and must be integrated into plans to combat the stigmatization and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, with a particular focus on stigmatized vulnerable groups, such as sexual minority groups.

In addition, States must ensure confidentiality with respect to test results so as to prevent discrimination. MERCOSUR and associated States believe that every effort should be made to ensure that people do not confuse testing with prevention and to make it clear that a negative HIV/AIDS status is not permanent. Moreover, the success of national voluntary testing campaigns will be gauged on the basis of countries' ability to guarantee persons living with HIV/AIDS universal access to treatment and to medication.

The national programmes of MERCOSUR and associated States are based on a policy of providing universal treatment and of ensuring access to medicines to all those who require them.

MERCOSUR and associated States joined the consensus on the draft decision on the understanding that countries have total flexibility in implementing their respective voluntary counselling and testing strategies in the framework of their national policies and action plans, including, as appropriate, the choice of whether or not to designate an International Voluntary HIV Counselling and Testing Day in 2007, as well as the manner in which to observe it.

MERCOSUR and associated States consider that this decision anticipates the debate on agenda item 46, scheduled for the first half of 2007, at which time the issue of voluntary counselling and testing will be considered comprehensively and in depth, with the participation of all States Members of the United Nations.

Mrs. Ghanashyam (India): I take the floor to explain India's position following the adoption of decision A/61/L.40, entitled "International Voluntary HIV Counselling and Testing Day".

My delegation has joined the consensus on the adoption of the draft decision on International Voluntary HIV Counselling and Testing Day. It is our understanding that, in calling on Member States, the decision leaves the option open to each Member State whether or not to designate a Voluntary HIV Counselling and Testing Day in 2007.

Ms. Davies (Australia): We are delivering this statement also on behalf of Canada, Japan and Norway.

We wish to note that our interpretation of the decision just adopted is that it invites Member States to consider designating a voluntary HIV/AIDS counselling and testing day, consistent with appropriate national HIV/AIDS strategies. We remain committed to a comprehensive HIV response and to supporting countries in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 46.

Organization of work

The Acting President: I should like now to consult members regarding an extension of the work of the Second Committee. Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 13 September 2006, the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the Second Committee would complete its work by Friday, 1 December 2006. However, the President of the Assembly has been informed by the Chairperson of the Second Committee that the Committee was not able to finish its work by Friday, 1 December. It is my understanding that the Committee will need to meet until Wednesday, 6 December 2006.

May I, therefore, take it that the General Assembly agrees to extend the work of the Second Committee until Wednesday, 6 December 2006?

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I would also like to inform members that consideration of agenda item 27, "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development", scheduled for Thursday, 7 December 2006, has been postponed to a later date to be announced.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.

United Nations A/61/PV.66

General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

66th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 6 December 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Mladineo (Croatia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Typhoon in the Philippines

The Acting President: I should like, on behalf of all of the members of the General Assembly, to extend our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of the Philippines for the tragic loss of life and material damage that resulted from the recent typhoon.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any requests for help.

I call on the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Mercado (Philippines): The Philippines thanks you, Madam, for your message of sympathy to the families of those who perished as a result of the recent super typhoon and mudslides that struck the Philippines last week. To date, more than 500 people have been found dead and some 750 are still missing.

An initial estimate of the damage to infrastructure and agricultural crops caused by the super typhoon and mudslides is more than $750 million. More than 1.5 million people in 13 provinces and 10 cities have been affected by the disaster. While the main roads in the affected provinces have been cleared, widespread power and communications outages remain in most affected areas, and lack of a water supply is a major concern.

Owing to the magnitude of the disaster, the Philippine Government has appealed for international assistance for its relief and rehabilitation efforts. Priority needs of the Government at this stage include safe drinking water, water purifiers, emergency shelter, such as tents and tarpaulins, generator sets and medicines.

As I speak, the Philippine Government, assisted by the international community, is continuing its 24-hour recovery and relief efforts. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared a state of national calamity on 3 December and mobilized the army to speed up recovery efforts and the delivery of relief services.

Through you, Madam, the Philippines wishes to thank the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Australia, Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea, Spain, the United States and our neighbours Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore for their speedy response in assisting the Philippine Government and its people in coping with this tragedy.

Agenda items 47 and 113 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

The Acting President: The General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda items 47 and

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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113 to hold, in accordance with resolution 60/265 of 30 June 2006, a specific meeting focused on development, including an assessment of progress over the previous year.

I am honoured to make the following statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, Her Excellency Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa.

> "During the sixtieth session, the General Assembly called for a specific meeting focused on development to be held during the sixty-first session in order to follow up on progress made to implement the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit and other internationally agreed development goals. Without doubt, those international agreements have made an unprecedented contribution to focusing attention and galvanizing global action in connection with one of the greatest challenges of our time: the fight against poverty and the promotion of human development for all.
>
> "If we can achieve those shared development goals, not only will we put an end to poverty, but we can also help to make the world a safer, more stable and prosperous place for all.
>
> "By integrating and coordinating the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, the General Assembly can make a real contribution.
>
> "When poverty is so immediate and suffering so intense, the world has a moral and strategic obligation to address the concerns of the poorest and most vulnerable, particularly in Africa. Given the challenges that we face, I have put development at the centre of the agenda of my presidency of the General Assembly. That is why, on 27 November, the General Assembly held an informal thematic debate on development, entitled 'Partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals: taking stock, moving forward'.
>
> "The aim of the debate was to take stock of progress made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to accelerate progress by providing a forum to examine practical measures that can lead to tangible results. During the debate, which brought together donor and recipient countries, as well as civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, we heard examples of effective partnerships, new approaches and success stories, but also of the challenges that threaten faster progress. We heard new commitments from participants aimed at eradicating poverty, including the generous announcement made by the Islamic Development Bank to establish a $10 billion poverty alleviation fund.
>
> "We heard that progress has been made towards reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs.
>
> "Over the past 40 years, the proportion of people in developing countries who can read and write has risen from under one half to nearly three quarters. Average life expectancy has increased, and there are 300 million more children in school. Rates of extreme poverty have fallen rapidly in much of Asia. In 1990, more than 1.2 billion people — 28 per cent of the developing world's population — lived in extreme poverty. By 2002, the proportion had decreased to 19 per cent.
>
> "Overall, steady progress is expected in the decade ahead. Thanks to increases in trade, aid and debt relief and to rapid economic growth in Asia, the number of people across the world living on less than $1 a day is expected to be halved by 2015.
>
> "However, progress towards achieving the MDGs is likely to remain uneven without further action. Half a million women still die in pregnancy and childbirth each year, and although death rates of children under the age of five have been dropping, every day about 30,000 children still die of preventable causes. Over 100 million children still do not go to primary school.
>
> "The biggest challenges are in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. On current trends, by 2015 over 90 per cent of the world's poor will live in those areas.
>
> "Step by step, we are making progress. More is expected and further action is needed. The challenge for all of us is to make good on our commitments and work in closer partnership.
>
> "Four key messages emerged from the informal thematic debate on development that

will no doubt be echoed here today. The first is that the commitments made at the major United Nations conferences and summits, particularly to create a global partnership for development, should be fulfilled in a timely fashion. Each of us here today has a responsibility for delivering our share of the commitments we have promised. We are all accountable.

"The second is that, by creating broader partnerships at the local, national and international levels, we can accelerate the implementation of the MDGs. Many delegations stressed that partnerships for development within their own countries, involving the public and private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society, were important to achieving the MDGs.

"Thirdly, we heard that the United Nations is central to the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs — from practical measures on the ground, to the broader role of the United Nations in convening and fostering global and local partnerships and providing technical support.

"Finally, we heard that by working together, we can implement the MDGs by 2015, and that doing so would be the single greatest gift to humanity that the international community has in its power to deliver.

"Going forward, the ultimate test of achieving our shared development goals will be how we manage the policy challenges of the future, including sustainable development, urbanization, water scarcity and climate change.

"A reformed and strengthened United Nations working with Government, civil society and the private sector will be better able to build capacity for development, rise to meet those new challenges and deliver more global public goals.

"But most of all, if the MDGs are to be achieved, it is critical that both developing and developed countries live up to the commitments made at last year's World Summit. As developing countries adopt comprehensive national strategies, donors must deliver on commitments to provide additional resources to enable them to succeed.

"Therefore, following on from the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, the year of promises and commitments, the sixty-first session must be the year of action and implementation. We must all strive to create an atmosphere that can build more effective partnerships towards achieving our shared goals. I remain convinced that we can achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. I hope that our discussions today can generate further action."

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group welcomes this specific meeting focused on development in the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 56 of the resolution on follow-up to development.

The economic development gap between developing countries and developed countries is still increasing. The world imbalances in the global economic, financial and trading regimes remain. The impact of developed countries' monetary and trade policies — and in particular their trade-distorting subsidies and non-tariff barriers — on developing countries remains unresolved. The full and timely implementation of all the outcomes of all the major conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields has still to be achieved. Therefore, all economic indications are that globalization has yet to deliver the poor from dehumanizing hunger and poverty.

The goals and targets of the Millennium Development Goals are (MDGs) off-track, in particular in Africa, despite appropriate measures taken and tremendous efforts made by least developed and landlocked developing countries themselves to build enabling national environments for the implementation of the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action. Their efforts to pursue much-needed development are limited, as the support received from development partners is still insufficient, or sometimes even completely lacking.

As a result of the suspension in the Doha trade negotiations, the Group of 77 and China has noted with concern that that may result in further protectionist tendencies. We are also of the view that, without a rules-based multilateral trading system, trade distorting policies — including distortions caused by subsidies in agricultural trade and non-market access — will persist

unabated, which would threaten the credibility of the rules-based multilateral trading system, thereby jeopardizing the prospects of developing countries to generate additional export revenue and income from agricultural exports.

Developing countries have already prepared strategies and plans for development, and many have accumulated sufficient practice and experience to know what would be required of them in order to achieve sustainable development. For that reason, the Group of 77 and China has called for developing countries to be allowed full policy space to achieve their own objectives.

On the other hand, leading international monetary and financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, have as yet not taken into account national strategies, including the policy framework adopted by the United Nations, to ensure that their policies are in conformity with the developmental objectives of developing countries and are responsive to the needs and concerns of the poor.

The Bretton Woods institutions must play am active role, in close collaboration with the United Nations, to formulate a global strategy for the eradication of hunger and poverty in developing countries. Essential to that process is the active voice and effective participation of developing countries themselves in the decision-making processes of the Bretton Woods institutions. That is central to promoting the legitimacy, relevance and effectiveness of the international financial system, and crucial if developing countries are to succeed in eradicating poverty and accelerating economic growth in a sustainable manner.

The Secretary-General, as part of his first reform package, proposed the establishment of the United Nations Development Account, under which proceeds from the savings envisaged from administrative efficiencies would be transferred to the Account in order to facilitate the implementation of social and economic projects in developing countries. The expectations that the level of the Development Account would grow to at least $200 million by 2003 have not been met. A concrete decision by Member States is required to increase the maintenance base of the Account and to avoid establishing new mandates from "within existing resources", which ultimately deplete savings that should be transferred to the Development Account. The Group of 77 and China wishes to urge other Member States to live up to the political commitments made in December 2005 and to increase the maintenance base of the Development Account by $5 million.

The eradication of hunger and poverty still remains the greatest global challenge facing the international community today. A more concerted, coherent and coordinated approach to saving humankind from the scourge of dehumanizing and degrading hunger and poverty and its crippling effects on the most vulnerable in society, namely, women and children, is urgently needed.

If we are to succeed in achieving the goals and targets of the MDGs by 2015, then we must ensure that the global partnership for development is fully implemented. It is therefore imperative that developed countries fully deliver on all the commitments they have made. In that regard, the integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow-up to, the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields is essential, and remains the priority role of the United Nations, if we are to succeed in lifting billions of people out of dehumanizing and degrading poverty and hunger.

The United Nations has a vital role to play in the promotion of an equitable global economic, financial and trading regime. The United Nations system and international organizations and institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, must translate all the commitments made at the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields into concrete and specific actions in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

The Group of 77 and China cannot emphasize enough the need for the United Nations to play a fundamental role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and the coherence, coordination and implementation of internationally agreed development goals. The United Nations, and the developed countries in particular, need to demonstrate unequivocal political will to operationalize and implement all the commitments made to enhance the global partnership for development that has been undertaken in writing, and not just demonstrate

perfunctory service to the implementation of an equitable and balanced financial, economic and social global order. That is essential if we are to fulfil the mandate of achieving an equitable, integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to the global partnership for development to create a better life for all those millions of people who so desperately need to be lifted out of dehumanizing and degrading poverty and hunger.

The resolution on follow-up to development emphasized the need to fully implement the global partnership for development, including living up to all the commitments already made, so as to enable developing countries to achieve the goals and targets of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs by 2015. In that regard, the full implementation of MDG 8 — "to develop a global partnership for development" — is critical to the success of achieving the 2015 target.

Now is the time for the full and timely implementation of the resolution on follow-up to development, which clearly and succinctly outlined all the actions that must be undertaken in the context of the implementation of all the outcomes of all the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

Mr. Rosengren (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries of Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries of Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The EU welcomes this first formal specific meeting on the follow-up to the development section of the World Summit Outcome. We are confident that our deliberations during today's debate will provide a good opportunity to exchange views on the specific issues of the development section.

The 2005 Summit emphasized that development must be based on a global partnership. The EU is committed to continue the building of a global partnership for development. In terms of aid policies, the EU has adopted an ambitious timetable for its member States to achieve the allocation of 0.7 per cent of gross national income to official development assistance (ODA) by 2015, with an intermediate collective target of 0.56 per cent by 2010.

In that regard, the EU recognizes the challenges in sub-Saharan Africa. The EU Africa strategy was agreed at the end of 2005, with a commitment to allocate to Africa half of the increase in EU aid. The strategy is committed to promoting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Strategic partnerships with other regions of the world have also been agreed since.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome stated that each country has the primary responsibility for its own development. The central role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized in the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. National ownership and leadership are prerequisites for sustainable development results. In that regard, there has been good progress at the country level, especially in terms of the introduction of poverty-reduction strategies. The EU remains firmly committed to supporting country-led sustainable development through actions on aid volume, aid effectiveness, debt relief, innovative finance mechanisms and trade. We support enhancing the voice and participation of developing countries in international financial institutions.

The United Nations has an opportunity to place itself in an incomparable position to provide technical assistance to draft and implement national development plans, following the lead of developing countries and in collaboration with other multilateral and bilateral donors. Operational effectiveness and inter-agency cooperation need to be strengthened in order for the system to be fully utilized for the benefit of those in need.

In drawing up their national development strategies, developing countries need — with international support — to make plans to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs and related national targets and objectives. Those include commitments made in the World Summit Outcome and the follow-up resolution regarding strengthening health systems and tackling HIV, tuberculosis and malaria; the implementation of education-for-all programmes; achieving universal access to reproductive health and promoting gender equality.

To be sustainable, poverty strategies must integrate environmental commitments to better manage the natural resource base of economic and social development. We must also all redouble our efforts to meet our commitments and obligations under the Framework Convention on Climate Change and to take forward the dialogue on long-term action to address climate change.

The World Summit Outcome document and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, taken together, have resulted in successful joint assistance strategies in several developing countries. Harmonization is key to achieving more and better results from development assistance. Achieving the MDGs requires improved policy coherence at the level of the United Nations and other multilateral cooperation forums, as well as at the national level. The EU has made concrete commitments to enhance policy coherence for development in 12 focal sectors. More recently, last October, the EU Council also agreed to improve its own decision-making systems so as to increase policy coherence for development.

The United Nations system needs to do the same. United Nations reform provides a good opportunity to do that. The recommendations contained in the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence provide an opportunity for the United Nations to upgrade its performance in order to deliver better development results at the country level. The evaluation and monitoring of the performance of the United Nations system as regards its development effectiveness, results and responsiveness to national development challenges needs to be strengthened. The United Nations system should more systematically take advantage of lessons learned. System-wide monitoring and evaluation is of the utmost importance. Capacity development in developing countries is at the very core of development activities.

The United Nations World Summit set the objective of decent work for all. I am therefore pleased that the European Union is taking initiatives towards promoting decent work, both within its borders and in its external relations. Last week, the Council adopted conclusions on the possibilities of promoting decent work through social, development and trade policy measures. We also stated that it was essential to promote development programmes and to cooperate with the United Nations and the International Labour Organization.

The EU Council adopted conclusions in October 2006 that emphasize the need for increased and more effective aid for trade in order to enable all developing countries, particularly least developed countries, to integrate into the multilateral rules-based trade system and to urge the Community and the member States to put their respective commitments on trade-related assistance into operation.

The EU believes that the Doha Development Round negotiations should be continued as soon as possible. A successful outcome of the negotiations will bring about considerable development benefits.

The 2005 World Summit gave United Nations reform new impetus. The normative and analytic expertise of the United Nations, as well as its operational and coordination capacities, can only be fully used in a streamlined and more efficient system. That is imperative if the MDGs are to be achieved by 2015. There needs to be a strong partnership between the United Nations system, Member States and other stakeholders to support the United Nations in its reform efforts and to make sure that we proceed together towards concrete action.

Since the Summit, we have taken steps in the General Assembly to follow-up and build upon the commitment of our leaders — in the special session on HIV/AIDS and in the high-level meetings on least developed countries and migration. We have agreed on a date for a conference to review the Monterrey Consensus and have adopted resolutions on development follow-up itself and on strengthening the Economic and Social Council. The EU strongly supports those developments and looks forward to the coming year, when new functions of the Economic and Social Council will be inaugurated, especially the annual ministerial review and the development cooperation forum.

Mr. Hamburger (Netherlands): The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union (EU). We would like to add a few words from our own perspective as a key development partner.

The Netherlands was, and continues to be, strongly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDGs and the Outcome of the 2005 World Summit guide our development cooperation policy. We do not need a new consensus on development; what we need now is

implementation in order to meet the commitments we have already made.

Many recent reports have made it clear that progress towards achieving the MDGs has been disappointing and uneven, despite many initiatives by developing countries themselves and the support provided by the international community. Especially for many of the least developed countries, the likelihood of attaining the MDGs by 2015 seems to become more remote every year. Although the responsibility for development lies first and foremost with developing countries themselves, meeting the MDGs is a shared responsibility of the entire international community. It requires a genuine partnership between developing and developed countries.

Developed countries have a special responsibility for achieving MDG 8. Recently, we reported on our efforts in our second MDG 8 report, and we will continue to do so regularly. It is important that all countries draw up MDG reports that account, in a transparent way, for national and international efforts.

An important aspect of MDG 8 is strengthening policy coherence at the national and international levels in support of the MDGs. We cannot give with one hand and take away with the other. It is particularly important in areas like trade, agriculture and the environment to meet the challenge of achieving synergy with development policy objectives.

Trade and integration into the regional and the world economy are essential preconditions for economic development and poverty reduction. The Netherlands supports an open, rules-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trade system, progressive trade liberalization and the elimination of distorting subsidies and non-tariff barriers. We deeply regret the suspension of the Doha negotiations and hope that they will resume soon. Developed and developing countries alike must do their utmost to ensure the successful conclusion of the Doha Round, and that it becomes a genuine development round.

Developed countries must also use debt cancellation to free up resources to realize the MDGs. The Netherlands supports debt cancellation for countries with an unsustainable debt burden, provided they are applying sound economic policies and good governance.

More efficient and effective use of existing resources is another area where important gains can be made. The implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is crucial. Improving effectiveness by better coordination among donor organizations and by alignment, and by promoting country ownership and leadership, has already yielded results in a number of countries. Developing countries also have their own responsibility for making aid effective.

Let me also emphasize the need for better quality funding. More predictable and long-term funding and budget support, instead of project funding, is required. The Netherlands is contributing to that by changing its own funding behaviour.

Ultimately, the MDGs have to be achieved at the country level through MDG-based national poverty reduction strategies. One of the outcomes of the 2005 Summit was that developing countries should adopt and implement such strategies by the end of 2006. At the moment, many developing countries are formulating their MDG-based poverty reduction strategies, with the active participation of all actors at the national and local levels. However, it is clear that much more needs to be done before all developing countries have formulated and implemented their strategies.

The international aid architecture has become more and more complicated because of the proliferation of bilateral and multilateral donors and of international funds and other financial mechanisms. It is placing an ever-increasing burden on the capacity of developing countries. The United Nations occupies a unique place in the aid environment. To achieve the MDGs, we need not only the efforts of developed and developing countries but also an effective, efficient United Nations — one that works coherently on development, security and human right issues, and one that delivers, in particular, at the country level.

However, the United Nations system as a whole is not yet fully delivering services in that coherent and effective manner. The system is highly complex and fragmented. That is a major weakness. Its financing is still unpredictable, incentives for real teamwork are often lacking and competition for funding leads to transaction costs that are too high.

The report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence provides a unique opportunity to rethink the way the United Nations is

operating in the changing aid environment, especially at the country level. The Netherlands strongly supports the "One United Nations" concept for development at the country level. For our part, we need to reward a better integrated and coordinated multilateral system with greater and more predictable funding. A long-term commitment to achieve the MDGs requires a long-term funding commitment.

The Netherlands looks forward to discussing the report of the High-level Panel with our partners here in the United Nations and at the country level.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): The past decade has witnessed a great number of important conferences and summits at which the international community committed to actions that, if effectively implemented, would signal a turning point in the global efforts to achieve the goals of sustainable development and poverty reduction. The commitments ranged from increasing resources for development and promoting sustainable development to making aid more effective.

It is important to note that all those major conferences and summits have given birth to ambitious but achievable goals and that achieving those goals is central to global stability and prosperity. The United Nations has played a crucial role in generating consensus on commitment to those goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Now it needs to take action to effect the achievement of these and other internationally agreed development goals and to support Governments in implementing national plans designed to achieve them.

The 2005 World Summit strongly emphasized the urgent need for an integrated effort to pursue the broader internationally agreed development goals and recognized the crucial role played by the conferences and summits in shaping a comprehensive vision to address the development challenges of our time in all their dimensions. By endorsing a broad vision of development, the Summit firmly placed the MDGs within the comprehensive agenda of the internationally agreed development goals. That move has given renewed political impetus and substantive significance to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to United Nations conference outcomes. One thing that the Summit made clear was the urgent need for a comprehensive review process that would provide a full picture of overall progress in implementing the internationally agreed development goals and would allow for the formulation of multifaceted policies that effectively cover interlinkages between the various conference goals.

While efforts are being made at the national and international levels to implement conference outcomes, progress remains slow, with a considerable gap between implementation and commitments. Therefore, the major challenge for the international community is the continually widening gap between agreed commitments and the fulfilment of those commitments.

We note with great concern that implementation continues to face a serious lack of political will — especially on the part of the donor community — to carry out agreed commitments within the established time frame. The failure, except on the part of a few countries, to reach the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income, which was adopted more than 30 years ago, is one example of the lack of political will. Although many developed countries have established timetables to achieve that target, their target dates are too close to the deadline for achieving the MDGs, namely, 2015, thus denying developing countries enough time for implementation. We could identify similar challenges being faced in the areas of debt relief, trade, environmental protection, et cetera, some of which are already known to many of us in the Assembly.

The challenges we face in implementing and following up on the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits are enormous, but not insurmountable. First and foremost, at the global level, the multilateral development system needs better global governance. There is a need to substantially improve the coherence of mandates and roles, as well as accountability and representation in the global governance system. We believe that that can be addressed through the ongoing system-wide reform of the United Nations aimed at making it more coherent and better able to deliver on implementation and follow-up and assist developing countries in achieving sustainable development goals. Factors that hinder the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals — including the MDGs — need to be identified, isolated and dealt with systematically in order to improve performance, while keeping the focus on areas where coordination and coherence need to be enhanced.

My delegation believes that a lot more could be achieved if the international community established an effective and comprehensive accountability and monitoring mechanism to track implementation by all development partners — especially the developed countries — of commitments undertaken at United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields and in various intergovernmental bodies to support the national development strategies of developing countries. Delayed action — or lack of action — on commitments has become the greatest obstacle to the achievement of goals in all areas in the context of global efforts to reduce poverty.

That is why we strongly support the recommendations of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. In particular, my delegation believes that the establishment of a United Nations Sustainable Development Board, together with the appointment of a United Nations Development Coordinator with responsibility for the performance and accountability of United Nations development activities, will greatly enhance the Organization's ability to act effectively. That will ensure that the United Nations maintains its focus on outcomes, responsiveness to development needs and the delivery of results that can be measured against the goals to be achieved.

However, efforts to promote system-wide coherence at the United Nations to better support the developing countries will not yield the desired results unless there is coherence at the global level in development assistance policies on the part of the developed countries, which have to be harmonized with the policies adopted by the Bretton Woods institutions, international non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Better coordination at the global level is critical for success in that effort.

The United Nations remains the best and the only global Organization with the competence and the experience required to handle the task of global governance. Indeed, the 2005 World Summit entrusted the Economic and Social Council with the responsibility for implementation and follow-up, and for expanding its functions to cover two major new instruments for carrying out that task: the annual ministerial substantive review and the Development Cooperation Forum. That will enable the Council and its subsidiary bodies to serve as a more unified system at the global and regional levels to guide and support the implementation of the internationally agreed development agenda.

We believe that that additional function will contribute immensely to the central role of the Economic and Social Council: promoting economic and social development through the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. We appeal to the international community to give the necessary support to the Council to enable it to effectively perform this additional but essential function.

Meanwhile, the relevant United Nations departments and agencies with normative capacities should be encouraged to continue to carry out work pertaining to international norm-setting and to monitoring and following up on the commitments made by development partners. This activity should be carried out in conformity with relevant intergovernmental agreements reached in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and at United Nations conferences and summits.

Mr. Al-Fayez (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in connection with the agenda item under consideration.

We welcome the convening of this meeting to stress the need for partnerships in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Saudi Arabia has contributed to relaunching the development process in developing countries, especially in the least developed countries (LDCs), by putting in place development assistance programmes to address poverty and place sustainable development and stability on the right track.

Saudi Arabia believes that development and the eradication of poverty are moral and humanitarian responsibilities and that achieving global economic balance and comprehensive sustainable development require international solidarity on the basis of collective responsibility and without selectivity or preconditions of any sort. We therefore also believe that peace and development go hand-in-hand, for States cannot achieve their development goals in situations of conflict and in the absence of peace and stability. On the contrary, without peace there is likely to be backsliding as regards development. Examples of that

include violence and blockades inflicted by the occupying Power, as well as the destruction of property and the excessive use of the war machine in Lebanon and Palestine, which have prolonged the suffering of those peoples. The lack of a just and comprehensive peace has deprived the people of Palestine and the other peoples of the region of development.

We reaffirm the role of the United Nations in the promotion of development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through the intensification of the development process and the exploitation of synergies among financing mechanisms. Achieving economic development, social stability, and confronting environmental and population problems should have higher standing among the priorities of the United Nations. In addition, the success of the development process depends upon respect by the international community for the traditions and cultural specificities of developing countries. In that regard, donor countries must realize that achieving the MDGs must be based upon the objectives set by each country.

Saudi Arabia believes that efforts to reform the global financial, monetary and trading system will not succeed without international consensus and the participation of the institutions concerned. At the same time, developing countries and least developed countries must demonstrate solidarity in tackling the obstacles they face to development, in order to achieve prosperity and well-being in their countries and strengthen their role in the international economy.

Saudi Arabia calls on the international community to find ways to cooperate globally to build a world economic order in a positive spirit, taking into account the national interests of countries without undermining the mandates of specialized international organizations.

Saudi Arabia hopes that a new humanitarian consensus will emerge based on partnership between developed and developing countries and on cooperation and solidarity in international economic relations that are grounded in justice, equality and capacity-building in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the developing countries and ensure access of their products to world markets.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasize that there will not be real development, economic prosperity and political stability in one part of the world only, while other parts suffer from hunger, poverty and the disasters of war and conflict. The use of force and violence in the resolution of conflicts has led to tremendous loss of human life and finances, damage to property, destruction of natural resources and the trampling of human dignity, and economic and social underdevelopment in developing countries. We believe that development can only be achieved through stability, and that stability can only be achieved through full respect for international legitimacy, dialogue and equality among States. There is no doubt that a spirit of cooperation and consensus will allow the international community to take the necessary measures to ensure development in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): My delegation wishes to join other speakers in expressing our pleasure at the convening of this very important plenary discussion on the issue of development. May I, at the outset, align my delegation with the statement that has been delivered by the Ambassador of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Today's meeting not only reinforces the need for the United Nations to address development on its own merits but underscores its centrality to the overall work of the Organization. It represents an important step towards ensuring that Members States and the wider United Nations system remain closely focused and reflective of the fundamental role that the United Nations plays in promoting development issues. We stand ready to support efforts in that regard.

Since the holding of the 2005 World Summit, the international community has taken positive steps towards moving the development agenda forward. Among the most salient steps have been the adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution on follow-up to the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit and, most recently, the adoption of the resolution on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. While we would have wanted to see more ambitious and bold proposals in both resolutions, beyond the reiteration of agreed language, we are pleased that the General Assembly was at least able to pronounce itself on what Jamaica feels are critical issues. It paves the way for the international community to make even more progress towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs), and towards ensuring that the United Nations is properly equipped to advance the process.

Now is the time to move beyond agreed language to the implementation of agreed commitments. We accept that that will involve further reflection on how best to improve coordination and promote coherence throughout the United Nations system. We are committed to working with others to that end. However, such an exercise must be informed by the greater objective of ensuring that the United Nations remains responsive to the needs of the millions of impoverished people around the world. We shall therefore study with great interest the proposals aimed at advancing that objective, including those contained in the recently released report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment.

One area in which we would have hoped to have seen more significant developments since the 2005 World Summit is that of trade. Despite the acknowledged importance of international trade as an engine for economic growth and development, there has been no forward movement on the now-stalled Doha trade negotiations. Each day without further progress in the trade talks severely jeopardizes and compromises the integrity of the multilateral trading system. We therefore urge all parties, in particular developed countries, to demonstrate the necessary political will, not only to successfully conclude the negotiations but, in so doing, to adhere to the development imperatives and commitments of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, the 1 August 2004 decision of the General Council of the World Trade Organization and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration.

Allow me, at this juncture, to identify four key issues that must continue to inform our deliberations on development.

The first concerns that of improved coordination and collaboration, both within and throughout the system and between the United Nations system and such bodies as the Bretton Woods institutions. It is imperative that we strengthen coordination within the United Nations system, in close cooperation with all other multilateral financial, trade and development institutions, in order to support sustained economic growth, the eradication of poverty and hunger, and sustainable development, especially in developing countries. Such collaboration and coordination can be undertaken without prejudice to the respective areas of competence of the institutions concerned. We see no other viable alternative to such an approach if we are to make significant progress, within the agreed timeframes, towards the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Equally important is the need to ensure that the United Nations system as a whole is not impeded in its efforts to shape a broad development vision and to identify commonly agreed objectives by duplication and overlap in the discharge of mandates for operational activities for development. Neither should the system be crippled by an overabundant reliance on earmarked voluntary contributions for programmes at the country level.

We also view greater cooperation between Member States as being instrumental to advancing international cooperation for development. That notion is correctly embodied in what has become known as the global partnership for development. It remains an important tool for fostering cooperation at the national, regional and international levels, as well as for providing a comprehensive and mutually beneficial framework to advance development objectives for both developed and developing countries. In our view, a key component of that framework is that of more targeted and substantial technical and financial assistance. For that reason, we welcome and encourage even greater commitments of support, especially with respect to debt and official development assistance, and endorse the call for continued efforts aimed at enhancing the quality of aid and increasing its impact. We support in particular calls for concrete, effective and timely action in implementing all agreed commitments on aid effectiveness, with clear monitoring and deadlines.

On the matter of debt, we would wish to underscore the importance of comprehensively addressing the debt problem of developing countries, including middle-income developing countries, whose debt problems are oftentimes not fully taken into account in the formulation of initiatives at the multilateral level.

Secondly, the debate on development must be guided by respect for national ownership and the formulation of national development strategies in

accordance with national priorities. We are pleased that that acknowledgement is featuring more prominently in the deliberations both here in the United Nations and in the wider international discourse on development issues. Such an approach is critical to providing developing countries with the necessary policy space to undertake and to meet their national and international obligations.

It is also important to bear in mind that there is no single sustainable model for development. Developing countries face a diverse range of economic conditions, constraints and opportunities. Accordingly, development plans and policies should be determined through internal processes based on national priorities. Development must also be premised on the principles of inclusiveness and transparency, especially as regards global economic governance and global economic decision-making. Good governance at the international level is fundamental for achieving sustainable development, and to ensuring a dynamic and enabling international economic environment.

Thirdly, we must now work towards translating into concrete action the commitments made with respect to the internationally agreed development goals and objectives. For that reason, we applaud the recent decision of the General Assembly to consider establishing effective mechanisms to monitor, review and follow up the implementation of the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. We look forward to continued discussions in that regard in the General Assembly, as well as in the Economic and Social Council, in particular through the annual ministerial reviews and in the context of the development cooperation forum.

Fourthly, our focus on development must take into account the special needs of the most vulnerable groups of countries, namely, those of small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing States. The lack of progress or the uneven progress made by those countries in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, reinforces the urgency with which greater efforts have to be undertaken to strengthen global partnership in the follow-up to, and implementation of, the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries, and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

In addition to the financial assistance required to support the implementation of those commitments, we look to the international community for support in the area of capacity-building, in order to enable those countries to overcome their development challenges.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming Jamaica's commitment to working with the international community in the area of development. We are already doing so with a number of development partners in several key areas. Those include education, HIV/AIDS, poverty and the environment, health and justice, as well as peace and security. Under a recent agreement between the Government and the United Nations Development Programme, for example, we stand to benefit from more than $7.5 billion in development support under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2007-2011. It is through continued concerted efforts like those by all that we can ensure the timely and full realization of the internationally agreed development goals, which are key to attaining the objective of poverty eradication. The United Nations remains an essential player in the entire process.

Mr. Miller (United States of America): As contained in paragraph (a) of Article 55, the United Nations Charter's mandate for economic and social development states that the United Nations shall promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development". I emphasize "conditions of ... progress and development" because it is clear from that phrase that the founders of this great institution saw development as a process, not a goal. Development is not something one achieves, it is something that one does. It is a process of change, improvement and growth.

How strange our language is on this subject. We divide ourselves into developed countries and developing countries. What does it mean to be developed? Does the process of development stop? And why, when we speak of developing countries, do we automatically express concern? Do we not all strive

to be developing? A continuing process of development is precisely what the United Nations Charter instructs us to promote.

It is not my intention to belabour a point of semantics. But I do want to note that our language is imprecise. Because of that, it is vitally important that our thinking be clear. Our concern here is not for developing countries per se, but rather for those that are not developing, not progressing, not changing — at least not fast enough to provide higher standards of living for their populations.

In economics, we measure the rate at which a country is progressing or developing primarily by measuring the rate at which its income per capita is growing. We achieve income growth by increasing productivity. We increase productivity primarily by improving health, education and access to capital. The Millennium Summit's Millennium Development Goals reflect the international community's emphasis on the first two of those factors, health and education. The Goals are concentrated heavily in those areas. The United States interacts in many ways with countries that are not developing or are developing too slowly, to help improve the health and education levels of their populations.

During the Bush Administration, the United States Government's international support for primary education has gone from $98 million in 2000 to more than $465 million this year. The United States provides the highest dollar level of official development assistance (ODA) for primary education of any donor, and at least 70 per cent of all United States ODA for education goes specifically to primary education.

In the area of health, the United States has made the largest commitment ever by any nation to an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease — a five-year, $15 billion, multifaceted approach to combating HIV/AIDS in more than 120 countries. The United States has also been, by far, the largest donor nation to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. During 2004 and 2005, the United States contributed $873 million to the Global Fund. The United States intends to contribute $844.5 million to the Global Fund for the period 2006-2007, bringing the total United States contribution to more than $2.3 billion. Through contributions such as those, the United States intends to combat ignorance, relieve suffering, help achieve the Millennium Development Goals and enable people in poorer countries to enjoy happier, more productive lives.

Surprisingly, the Millennium Summit paid little attention to the most significant factor that increases productivity: access to capital. In 2002, the United Nations addressed that oversight at the International Conference on Financing for Development held at Monterrey. The Monterrey Consensus focused on ways to mobilize capital for development through domestic savings, international trade, foreign direct investment, debt relief and official development assistance. The importance of domestic sources of capital was highlighted through ground-breaking work by economist Hernando de Soto, who estimated, for example, that as much as $9.3 trillion in untitled real estate capital was owned by the poor in developing countries. What was needed to gain access to that capital and put it to work was regulatory reform, property rights, the rule of law and a streamlined business environment. Globalization was recognized as a second extraordinary potential source of capital, with gains from trade in the hundreds of billions of dollars available in a liberalized trade environment. Other sources of public and private capital, such as debt relief, foreign direct investment and remittances, were also recognized as significant.

At Monterrey, President Bush called for the establishment of a new compact for global development. By January 2004, such a new compact had been established as the Millennium Challenge Account, which offers help to countries that undertake regulatory and governance reforms ensuring the effective use of assistance. The goal is to help such countries integrate more fully into the global economic system and gain access to the vastly larger sources of capital that are available in the private sector.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation has identified more than two dozen countries that are eligible for assistance and has signed multi-year commitments with 10 of them. Just recently, Mali — one of the poorest countries in the world, with an annual per capita income of only $380 — signed on to a compact that will dedicate nearly half a billion dollars to irrigation, transportation and industrial infrastructure development. In just two years, the Millennium Challenge programme has provided more than $3 billion in foreign aid to countries that have assumed ownership and taken responsibility with regard to their own development.

The United States has also become the largest provider of trade-related assistance. In December 2005, at the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference held in Hong Kong, the United States announced its plan to more than double its contributions to the global Aid for Trade programme, from $1.34 billion in 2005 to $2.7 billion annually by 2010. Net goods imports by the United States from the developing countries totalled $487 billion in 2005, dwarfing the size of financial flows from any other sources to those countries. Finally, non-trade private financial flows from the United States to poorer countries — in the form of personal remittances, net private investment and non-governmental organization grants — total $119 billion, four times the amount of United States official development assistance.

At the beginning of my statement, I noted that development is a process — a process of change, improvement and growth. Through programmes and policies such as those that I have described, my Government seeks to help others, and particularly the poorest, to make that process as rapid and as profound as possible.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): My delegation congratulates you, Madam President, on the holding of this important meeting. We believe that our deliberations will underscore the requirements for achieving the internationally agreed development goals and will help to bring development to centre stage in the context of United Nations activities.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement of South Africa made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. However, I would like to highlight the following issues.

In our lifetime, the world has witnessed significant progress. More people than ever before are succeeding each year in breaking out of the trap of poverty. Many more are living in greater progress and prosperity.

But every one in this world does not equitably enjoy the fruits of these advances. One quarter of the world's population lives on less than one dollar a day. The gap between rich and poor continues to expand. What we now need is a new development paradigm with a focus on poverty alleviation and an appropriate mix of quality and quantity of growth.

The least developed countries (LDCs) are the most underprivileged. They confront such significant structural impediments that they are by themselves unable to break out of the trap of poverty. Unable to integrate themselves into the world economy in a meaningful way, they are threatened with marginalization. A number of them are slowly but inexorably sliding into a state of regress. These countries continue to do so because of their intrinsic inability to mobilize external and domestic resources and put them to productive use. Global support to them is woefully inadequate. The international community must provide the enabling ambiance and support to them. That is the overarching aim of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In my own country, Bangladesh, we believe that we must ourselves be in control of our development destiny. From our experience, we have learned that every society performs best when it depends on its own intellectual and cultural resources. We have found that the simplest home-grown ideas can often effect the profoundest changes. Take microcredit and women's non-formal education, for instance. Developments in these areas have transformed our societal landscape. We are pleased that the guiding spirit of microcredit, Professor Muhammad Yunus, has been accorded global recognition with the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. Professor Yunus says he looks forward to the day when poverty can be put away in a museum showcase.

So it remains our view that development is best achievable through a prudent mix of appropriate strategies, sound macroeconomic management and careful use of external support, all within a culture of pluralism, democracy, good governance, human rights, gender justice and women's empowerment. The existence of a vibrant civil society is key. The modest achievements of Bangladesh, and there have been many despite our manifold constraints, are attributable to our adherence to these values.

Pragmatic policies and programmes have contributed to the rapid advancement in our basic human development indicators. The economy is growing at 6.5 per cent. Poverty has been reduced by 40 per cent. We have already achieved two MDGs, namely, access to safe drinking water and removal of gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Enrolment in primary education for 97 per cent of our children has been ensured. Child and infant mortality rates have now dropped to 65 per thousand.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 2005 registered Bangladesh's noteworthy success in the social sectors. The report recognized that Bangladesh achieved this progress through stronger State action and civic activism despite the relatively modest level of income growth.

The 2005 report placed Bangladesh in the medium human development category. The UNDP Human Development Report 2006 revealed that Bangladesh has demonstrated impressive gains in the water and sanitation sectors. That report notes that, ten years ago, Bangladesh had the lowest level of access to sanitation. It is now on target to achieve nationwide sanitation coverage by 2010.

In our view, four strategies have contributed to our human development take-off. First, there are the active partnerships developed with civil society. Secondly, there is the transfer of resources to targeted groups. Thirdly, we have implemented extended health programmes, including widespread immunization coverage. Fourthly, we have developed virtuous cycles for the benefit of women, including access to microcredit.

Despite all these forms of progress, the reality remains that we still have a long way to go if we are to achieve all of the MDGs. Several essential measures are prerequisite and that is the incontrovertible reality. These measures must be undertaken in the spirit of partnership that our leaders have agreed during the Millennium Summit.

The first of these measures is the expansion of official development assistance in consonance with the commitments made by developed countries. Secondly, an immediate commitment to writing off all outstanding debts of all LDCs must be made. Thirdly, immediate duty-free, quota-free market access for all products from all LDCs on a lasting basis must be allowed. Fourthly, all kinds of protectionism, including arbitrary use of non-tariff, non-trade and other restrictive barriers must be eliminated. Fifthly, rules of origin criteria must be made realistic, simple and flexible. Sixthly, free access of all categories of service providers under Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) must be provided. Finally, the voice of and participation by the developing and least developed countries in the decision-making processes of the Bretton Woods Institutions must be enhanced.

The Millennium Summit set forth an ambitious vision for the international community. It was meant to achieve a sea change for the developing world. Our age is different from all others that have gone before. That is so, because today we believe that alleviating the pains of some is the responsibility of all.

We must work collectively to expand the scope of hope for humanity and to create a world where peace and stability reign, where the ambiance is appropriate for development, where the environment is protected and where disease and poverty are drastically reduced. We in the developing world are eager to forge ahead, in partnership with others, with the achievement of our aspirations. For we know that, when there is a hill to climb, waiting will not make it any smaller.

Mr. Sen (India): We are happy to participate in a meeting focused on development. We thank the Secretary-General for the reports on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. We associate ourselves with the statement made by South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For developing countries, the centrepiece is development. If the agenda of the United Nations diverges substantially from the agenda of development, then the very purpose and validity of this Organization will come under a question mark.

More than two and half decades ago, the representative of one of the developed countries famously said that the right to development is a letter to Santa Claus. If that is the case, then that is the only kind of Santa Claus in which the adults of the developing countries believe. What is more, Santa Claus does occasionally answer our letters.

Since the Millennium Summit in 2000, progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals has been uneven and the levels of human deprivation remain stagnant. The challenges remain most pressing in Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, where the proportion of people living in extreme poverty is essentially unchanged since 1990 and the absolute number has increased dramatically. In fact, the absolute number has doubled.

It is also worth remarking here in this context that the total agricultural subsidies of the United States, the European Union and Japan exceed the total income of sub-Saharan Africa. I saw an article recently indicating that 2 per cent of the people own 50 per cent of the world's assets. This is not a situation that is likely to be politically or morally sustainable for a long time.

Reference was made by one of the earlier speakers to Article 55 of the Charter, which also emphasizes full employment. That goes back to 1945, when the International Trade Organization (ITO) was supposed to be set up but was not, and the Charter of the ITO similarly included this, on an issue which remains relevant to economic theory even today, namely that getting prices right or liberalizing is not enough to achieve welfare maximization. There have to be separate and positive policies on achieving full employment.

It is true that the categories of developed and developing countries need to be understood in the light of the fact that the developed countries, too, need to develop. Here, in the context of the issue of poverty, may I mention that economists have estimated that between 1999 and 2004, even in the most advanced country in the world, the United States, while average income increased by 11 per cent, the median household income — that is, the income of the family at the centre — actually fell by 3 per cent, or $1,500. So that is a relevant argument.

It is no coincidence that the 2005 World Summit reaffirmed that the realization of the Millennium Development Goals would require stronger international cooperation for development and stressed the need for the United Nations to play a fundamental role in the promotion of international cooperation for development. The United Nations played a creative and critical leadership role in shaping the international economic agenda in the 1970s. It has to do so again. The agreement on the follow-up to development commitments and goals is a welcome step.

Development follow-up resolution 60/265 emphasized the urgent need to fully implement the global partnership for development and to enhance the momentum generated by the 2005 World Summit. In this sense it recognized the need for a shift in debates from principles to practicalities or, in other words, from normative debates to a phase of implementation. Implementation should be understood broadly to include resources as well as interpretation, building further on what is unclear or incomplete, and doing this in terms of the evolving reality outside. We need to look at problems of resources and interpretation. The physical and social infrastructure in some countries is sometimes too weak to attract any private investment, and therefore the fulfilment of developed countries' commitment to the 0.7 per cent target for official development assistance as well as innovative sources of financing are crucial.

In that context, we are happy to note that several developed countries are making efforts to meet their commitments in terms of official development assistance. We are also encouraged that some of them have also made available — one of them did so today — information on their efforts in this direction, as agreed in the development follow-up resolution. Some views have been expressed with regard to the role of private investment in economic growth, and we welcome all this.

The de facto veto and the lack of transparency and public accountability and, above all, the relative economic weights and the governmental structure of 1945, which is totally antiquated and inapplicable to the economic realities of today, might still have been accepted if at least the Bretton Woods institutions had managed to ensure international economic and financial stability. But this is quite clearly and manifestly not the case. The standard advice on capital account convertibility and on belt-tightening by Governments in the face of fiscal surpluses has not only contributed to the crisis but has in fact made the crisis worse. The poorest countries, on the other hand, continue to strain under increasing conditionalities, which mark even the new policy support instrument of 2005.

In that context, therefore, it is necessary to assess the performance of these international institutions and to suggest correctives leading to reform, because, otherwise, what was predicted by the late Milton Friedman, the great economist, from an entirely different perspective might well happen. He had actually argued that the International Monetary Fund should be abolished. Of course, he argued this from the perspective that the money market should be left to equilibrate. But that could happen from the perspective that I have just outlined — that is, the opposite perspective.

The inequities in the global monetary, financial and trading systems remain. The Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have strayed far away from their original mandate, which is employment-generating macroeconomic policies. Developing countries need rule-based multilateral regimes, but such rules have to be truly equitable and should not have an adverse impact on the scope for the implementation of their national development strategies. In the context of defending livelihoods, the sovereign functions of the State cannot be undermined, and regimes that erode the autonomy of policy space need to be reformed. Therefore, a fundamental reform of international monetary, financial and trading institutions is essential, underpinned by new and truly equitable rules.

It is also crucial for the United Nations to undertake a regular and periodic review and assessment of international economic policies and of their impact on development. In the context of systemic issues, it is particularly important to implement the commitment to enhance the ability of developing countries to participate meaningfully in decision-making, an important component of which is to provide assistance to developing countries in enhancing their capacity to assess the impact on them of policy changes. Most of the developing countries do not have the resources to do so.

The deliberative discussions of the WTO and of other international economic organizations could be complemented if there were an independent body to evaluate alternative proposals and their impact on developing countries. The United Nations is best placed to do so. Assessments must be made of the disparity between predicted consequences and what actually happens. The Economic and Social Council has the responsibility to review the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions. Efforts should be made to ensure that that responsibility is carried out fully and to examine how other economic policies could be brought into this review.

We welcome the agreement reached in this regard in the context of strengthening the Economic and Social Council. We are confident that the Council, on the basis of the review and assessment of international economic policies — the international financial, monetary and trade policies of relevant institutions — will make recommendations where needed, so that the necessary correctives will make the international economic environment supportive of development. This will not only increase confidence in, and the legitimacy of, international economic governance, but also may lead to better economic governance that may benefit both the developing and the developed world. It is logical that the General Assembly will have some views, primarily to build on the focused consideration of these issues in the Economic and Social Council. Specific meetings focused on development will go a long way, not only in building complementarity between the Council and the General Assembly, but also in enhancing the development agenda of the United Nations.

Seventy per cent of the gains of trade liberalization since the Uruguay round have actually benefited the developed countries, and only 30 per cent have benefited the developing countries. The developed countries, on average, charge tariffs on the products of developing countries that are four times higher than those on the products of developed countries. Those are estimates made by well-known economists. We therefore have to do something to break the impasse reached by the Doha round.

The suspension of the Doha round of trade negotiations is therefore a cause for concern, because so far it has delivered neither fair trade nor development, although it was supposed to be a development round. The impasse, as well as the recent discussions in the Second Committee, have shown that while national borders should not matter for trade and capital flows, we should not raise the issue of technology and labour flows; while subsidies are bad for industrial goods, we should not talk about agricultural subsidies; while the private interests of intellectual property rights holders are sacrosanct, we should not discuss the public interest or protecting the biogenetic resources of developing countries.

The resumption of trade negotiations is desirable, but adhering to the agreed mandates of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, the July Framework and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration is a categorical imperative. A demonstration of political will by the developed countries will be required if negotiations are to be saved. A clear political direction to the WTO by the United Nations, among others, therefore remains necessary.

India has consistently maintained that the process of United Nations reform should be driven by a vision

of a strengthened role for the United Nations on development issues. We recognize that the delivery role of the United Nations will perforce be peripheral, given the modest funds available to the United Nations and the huge requirements of developing countries.

Yet there is an important catalytic role to be played by the United Nations. What is needed is to address the fundamental issue of the gap between mandates and financial resources for their fulfilment. We are confident that discussions in the context of promoting system-wide coherence will give the utmost consideration to this fundamental issue of a resource gap. Preliminary consideration has highlighted the need for enhanced allocations in the regular budget for the developmental activities of the United Nations.

With regard to the needs of small States, in particular those of small island developing States, it is important that, in the context of confining the United Nations Development Programme to so-called niche areas, the developmental role of that body not be eliminated.

In the context of the role of the United Nations in development, it is also important to strengthen the current accountability framework for executive management at the levels of Under- and Assistant Secretaries-General, including formal and transparent performance evaluations and sanctions for not meeting performance targets. The voice and effective participation of developing countries is important, not only in the context of international economic policymaking but also in the management and administration of the Organization — as well as important for pursuing the development agenda, which is the overriding priority of the majority of the membership of the Organization, namely, developing countries. It is particularly important that developing countries are represented at the executive management levels and that there is a balance in representation between developed and developing countries.

The ongoing debate in the context of human resources management thus assumes significance. It might also be useful to further consider the establishment of an open and transparent appointment process, including through broad consultations and confirmation by the General Assembly for improving accountability. We look forward to discussions on the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on governance.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The delegation of Pakistan is grateful to the President of the General Assembly for the decision to convene this plenary meeting on the implementation of the decisions of major United Nations conferences on development. The informal thematic debate on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that was held on 27 November was very useful. That was also testimony to the President's commitment to development — a central pillar of the work of the United Nations, its major raison d'être and its principal responsibility.

International economic relations are, obviously, unequal and inequitable for developing countries. Paradoxically, globalization has expanded both prosperity as well as poverty: the rich have become richer but the poor have become poorer, and are growing in number and proportion. In recent years, growth in the developing and developed worlds has not been accompanied by growth in employment, thereby enlarging the circle of the poor. Growth with equity should be the prime target of development. Growth with equity should be the target of the United Nations.

Today international economic and social relations are conducted through multiple channels, at the policy and operational levels. There is, however, general agreement about the goals and policies that we have to achieve at the national, regional and international levels, especially because of the decisions taken by numerous conferences and summits convened by the United Nations over the past several years, including the 2000 Millennium Summit and the 2005 United Nations Summit. Those decisions are collectively denoted as the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. What has been absent thus far is an overarching mechanism to ensure adequate follow-up and implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and the MDGs, as well as to ensure coherence and coordination in the governance of international and national policies relating to those development objectives.

Resolution 60/265, on follow-up to the development outcomes of the 2005 Summit, provided for the convening of this special meeting of the General Assembly to review the progress made in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and the MDGs. Indeed, implementation has remained the Achilles heel of the endeavours of the United Nations in the field of development. In order to enable a meaningful review,

this special meeting should have been preceded by an adequate preparatory process. The most essential component of this process would be the establishment of a monitoring mechanism — perhaps through the annual ministerial review that the Economic and Social Council is to hold each year — that could measure, on an objective basis, the progress or lack thereof in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and the MDGs.

Such an objective evaluation requires the elaboration of a comprehensive matrix of development goals, targets, indicators and actors involved in the implementation of each of the internationally agreed development goals and the MDGs in the fields of finance, trade and technology, as well as in the social sectors. Such an evaluation and matrix would enable an assessment of the actions taken by all the relevant players — national Governments, development partners, international institutions, civil society and the private sector — in the full realization of the internationally agreed development goals and MDGs.

We trust that that work of developing such a comprehensive matrix is being actively implemented by the relevant departments of the United Nations — including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Statistical Commission — in consultation with other relevant development agencies and institutions.

It is on the basis of the objective information within such a comprehensive matrix that the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions could carry out evaluations of the progress being made towards the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and MDGs. In turn, their evaluations could enable such a special meeting of the General Assembly to provide policy guidance to enhance such implementation and to make recommendations for adjustments to policy. To enable the General Assembly to provide such policy guidance, it is also essential that the Assembly hold this special meeting concurrently with the annual general debate, thereby enabling high-level policymakers, including ministers, heads of State and heads of Government, to participate in, and contribute to, the Assembly's deliberations and decisions.

We trust that, beginning with the sixty-second session of the General Assembly and the coming sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its annual Ministerial Review, such a process of objective and high-level evaluation of the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and the MDGs can soon be put in place.

Mr. Baum (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We are meeting today to undertake a first review of the implementation of resolution 60/265. As this resolution was adopted just six months ago, too little time has elapsed for any progress to have occurred in the various areas it covers. My comments will therefore focus on two recommendations that address the United Nations specifically.

First, the resolution calls for the United Nations to play a key role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and to ensure coherence, coordination and implementation of the international agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Switzerland subscribes entirely to this essential message and stresses that resolution 57/270 B still provides an adequate and relevant framework for the United Nations in this context. Development is a highly complex issue and we therefore believe that it is in the interest of the United Nations to tackle the components of development by separating them in a logical manner, to avoid dealing with mere generalities. What is required is to adopt a well-structured approach, for example, as agreed upon by the General Assembly in resolutions 57/270 B and 59/250. But that approach requires a collective discipline to implement what has been agreed upon, and so that it can serve as a basis for our future action.

In this context, my delegation believes that the 2005 World Summit Outcome document offers a unique opportunity to collectively strengthen the Economic and Social Council. Both the annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum can help achieve that goal, subject to the condition that we make sure that they provide genuine value added. As we have stated on previous occasions, we will base our assessment on the strengthening of the convening power of the Council's high-level segment. We all hope to see large numbers of ministers attending the meeting. Let us therefore ask ourselves what could be of interest to them; what could motivate them. This

will be possible only if meetings deal with narrowly focused thematic subjects and if the Secretariat and the Member States have sufficient time to prepare for them.

The new Development Cooperation Forum offers valuable potential to harmonize and improve the relationships among bilateral aid, multilateral aid and other aid mechanisms; move the discussion on aid effectiveness to a truly multilateral level; offer a platform where the voice of the beneficiaries, including Governments, can be heard and is given adequate consideration; provide a comprehensive overview of the existing funding channels, including major private foundations as well as emerging donors; and promote consensus on the harmonization and balancing of the funding architecture.

With respect to the annual Ministerial Review and the customary thematic debate, Switzerland is convinced that they should have coherent themes, ideally one theme per year. It is quite unlikely that three different ministerial groups — on environment, finance and agriculture, for example — could follow each other in the context of a single high-level segment.

For the same reason, we need to avoid mixing the functions and debates of the follow-up process to the Monterrey Conference with those of the Economic and Social Council. We now have a United Nations intergovernmental architecture that allows us to address four fundamental aspects of development. First, there is the review of global development objectives at the annual Ministerial Review. Secondly, we have the review of the financing issues related to development as part of the Monterrey follow-up process. Thirdly, there is the coordination of United Nations development architecture in the Economic and Social Council. Finally, there is the effectiveness of development cooperation in the Development Cooperation Forum and the triennial review. Let us improve our intergovernmental architecture in such a way that these different functions can be strengthened.

My second point involves concrete, effective and timely action in implementing all agreed commitments on aid effectiveness, as called for in resolution 60/265.

In the specific United Nations context, we have an ongoing, uncompleted agenda, spelled out in the triennial comprehensive policy review. It aims at assuring the alignment and harmonization of the United Nations development system, at reducing transaction costs and at ensuring that its efforts translate into improved implementation capacity and enhanced absorptive capacity of the beneficiary countries.

Considerable progress has been made in the implementation of the triennial review process in the United Nations development system, but mostly by the four so-called "ExCom" agencies. Much remains to be done, especially to ensure that the most important and development-relevant specialized agencies join the United Nations country teams.

The High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence recently delivered its report to the Secretary-General. While Switzerland is still studying it, nevertheless, at this early stage, we already consider that the report contains quite a number of particularly interesting recommendations.

The upcoming triennial review should be prepared with great care both at the Secretariat and the intergovernmental levels. In doing so, we need to ensure that the various executive boards continue to function in a satisfactory manner while taking all the necessary decisions. The triennial review is not about totally recasting the operational system, but seeks to strengthen it, while allowing it to continue to function at full capacity. That is all the more important as those issues at stake are of high complexity and very often appear to be highly technical.

Mr. Pedroso (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the initiative of convening today's meeting to concentrate on the problems associated with development. It is particularly relevant for the United Nations, which over the last 15 years has worked to build an international consensus on development from which many international commitments and goals have arisen. We fully support the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf the Group of 77 and China.

The United Nations does not need new development commitments in the economic and social areas. As we had the occasion to state in the General Assembly's debate on 20 November, in the more than five years that have elapsed since the Millennium Declaration was adopted, the so-called development agenda for our nations is very far from being effectively implemented, due to the major challenges and obstacles that continue to be placed in the way of

countries of the developing world by the neoliberal globalization process. Lasting solutions to the issues addressed in the Monterrey Consensus — such as official development assistance, foreign debt, foreign direct investment and international trade — remain an illusion. The important goals agreed on in Johannesburg for the true achievement of sustainable development are far from being fulfilled.

As we stated previously, neither the international community nor the United Nations needs new goals or commitments; what is required is explicit political will on the part of developed countries. It is now more necessary than ever for those countries to honour the commitments they have entered into. They must move from oration to action, shoulder their responsibilities and not attempt to delay the fulfilment of the commitments that have been made. Solving the problems that continue to afflict poor countries is the concern of the entire international community, without distinction between rich or poor. It is essential that we all work in the framework of genuine multilateral international cooperation that is based on the principles of solidarity, complementarity and mutual benefit. Only then will we be able to establish a real and fair international partnership for development and ensure the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for this specific meeting focused on development.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 47 and 113.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.